Transforming Peasants, Property and Power

The Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania, 1949–1962

Edited by
Constantin Iordachi and Dorin Dobrincu

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Constantin Iordachi
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Dorin Dobrincu

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Foreword

GAIL KLIGMAN
KATHERINE VERDERY

The present volume is the result of an interdisciplinary collaborative project entitled *Transforming Property, Persons, and State: Collectivization in Romania, 1949–1962*, which we initiated in 1998. The project was the fruit of the extensive research each of us had conducted separately over more than three decades; we wanted finally to carry out a project together. In the early 1990s, while Robert Levy was conducting research on the life and political activity of Ana Pauker for his dissertation at UCLA, he identified numerous unpublished documents concerning collectivization. At the same time, we were each in the Romanian villages where we have worked for many years, researching the processes of decollectivization and postsocialist transformation, with the aid of oral histories. The convergence of these research themes suggested that the history of collectivization was ideal for a joint project.

This is a very complex subject, one far exceeding our joint capacities. Therefore, we formulated the project as a multi-disciplinary, collaborative endeavor and invited a number of Romanian colleagues to join us. We also invited Robert Levy, Michael Stewart (anthropologist, University College, London), and Linda Miller (legal consultant, New York and Bucharest). The disciplines included in our team were history, anthropology, sociology, ethnography, law, and literary criticism. Our main objectives in selecting our research team were to foster cooperation that was not only international and interdisciplinary, but also intergenerational. Toward this end, we invited a number of doctoral students and young researchers to join our project as well.[1]

The methods we adopted combined techniques and sources from all the disciplines represented, with particular emphasis on archival documents, official statistics, legislation, and oral history interviews. In using these sources, we profited greatly from the different experiences and skills of our team members. The historians provided instruction on how to use archives—where to find the various collections, how they were created, what problems to anticipate—and the anthropologists, sociologists, and ethnographers underscored the necessity of careful research preparation within a shared conceptual framework. We discussed at length how to carry out the interviews, what kinds of questions all team members should pursue, and the categories of individuals we should interview. Seeking as diverse a group of respondents as possible, we included people of different re-

gions, nationalities, religions, gender, age (although most would have been mature adults in the years 1940–1960),[2] and social class—poor, middle, or wealthy, according to the categories created during the communist period—as well as Party activists, functionaries, and both peasants who joined collectives and those who refused to do so.

For this project, we conceptualized collectivization as a fundamental means for understanding the very formation of the Romanian Party-State, in contrast to its more customary conceptualization as an auxiliary to industrialization and urbanization (see the editors' introduction). Moreover, we emphasized that collectivization was not simply a top-down process, but one resulting from complex interactions between centrally created policies and their local implementation. We viewed the process as variable across space and time, and therefore selected a broad sample of research sites differing not just in religious and ethnic composition but also in economy, terrain, date of collectivization, and other related variables. Several of the project participants (Robert Levy, Linda Miller, Eugen Negrici, Marius Oprea, and Octavian Roske) focused on national level policies and practices (i.e., property legislation, requisitions, propaganda, and debates about the form collectivization should take). The others conducted case studies, working across a broad span of communities and experiences.

The geographical distribution of our research sites was as follows:

1. For Transylvania, Julianna Bodó, two villages (Armaşeni and Corund) from the area inhabited by Szeklers (now Harghita county); Călin Goina, Sântana commune (Arad county); Gail Kligman, Ieud commune (Maramureş county); Sándor Oláh, two villages (Sânpaul and Lueta/Lövéte) from the former district (*raion*) of Odorhei (Harghita county); Michael Stewart, three villages (Poiana, Jina, and Apoldu de Jos) from Sibiu county; Virgiliu Ţârău, two villages (Rimetea and Măgina) in the former district of Aiud (Cluj county); Katherine Verdery, the village of Aurel Vlaicu (Hunedoara county); and Smaranda Vultur, Tomnatic commune (Timiş county) and Domaşnea commune (Caraş-Severin county).
2. For Moldavia, Dorin Dobrincu, the settlement of Darabani (Botoşani county); Cătălin Stoica, two villages (Vadu Roşca and Năneşti) in Vrancea county; and Dumitru Şandru, the commune of Pechea (Galaţi county).
3. For southern Romania, Liviu Chelcea, Reviga commune (Ialomiţa county); Constantin Iordachi, the village of Jurilovca (Tulcea county), combined with a synthetic overview of Dobrogea region; and Puiu Lăţea, Dobrosloveni commune (Olt county).[3]

Coordinating such a complex project required several meetings of our research team. We held an initial planning workshop at UCLA (April 1999),[4] followed by three working meetings in Timişoara (September 2000) and Bucharest (September 2001 and February 2003).[5] For each meeting, participants were asked to prepare summaries of their research to date; these served as the basis for devel-

oping and maintaining a common language throughout the project. The Timişoara meeting was essential in consolidating the multi-disciplinary character of the research. Over the course of two days, we discussed in detail both the theoretical framing of the project and the two principal methodologies each participant would employ: intensive interviewing and archival research. At this meeting we also discussed the project's ethical requirements, as governed by the Human Subjects Review protocols of U.S. funding agencies (similar to Romania's newly instituted *Avocatul Poporului*, or People's Advocate). We thank Smaranda Vultur and the *Fundația A Treia Europă* (Third Europe Foundation) for organizing and hosting that meeting. Although the second meeting was disrupted by the events of September 11th, 2001, we were able to discuss everyone's progress at this mid-point of the project and to resolve some of the methodological problems that had arisen. At our final meeting in February 2003, we discussed the papers to be included in this volume.[6] We are grateful to Anca Oroveanu and Marina Hasnaş, in particular, and to the New Europe College, in general, for hosting the third meeting and for administering other project-related matters.

As initiators of this project, we wish to express our great appreciation for the wonderful work and timely cooperation of our Romanian colleagues. We could not have assembled a more congenial and intellectually stimulating group, from whom all of us learned a tremendous amount. We are indebted to Dorin Dobrincu and Constantin Iordachi, who agreed to take on the burden of editing the papers for the Romanian edition of this volume. It was our good fortune and great pleasure to work closely with them.[7] For preparing the English edition, we are especially grateful to Constantin Iordachi, without whose tireless efforts this book would never have seen the light of day. He assumed the bulk of the work, overseeing and correcting the entire translation with dispatch; he has our heartfelt thanks. Throughout the several years of its operation, our project benefited from the generous assistance of many persons and institutions. We are especially grateful to all those people who agreed to give us interviews on this often-disturbing subject, sometimes across multiple meetings that lasted several hours. Similarly, we wish to thank the funding agencies without whose support our research agenda could not have been carried out, specifically (in the U.S.) the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research (NCEEER), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the National Science Foundation (NSF),[8] and the British Academy. All the opinions, data, and conclusions included in this volume express the viewpoint of the authors and are not the responsibility of these funding sources. In Romania, all team members benefited from the use of their respective county branches of the Romanian National Archives, whose directors and staff we acknowledge here. Several of us were also granted access to the Secret Police archives, through the National Council for the Study of the Secret Police Archives (CNSAS). We are especially grateful to Andrei Pleşu, Gheorghe Onişoru and Florica Dobre for their assistance, as we are generally to the Council's Archival Directorate.

For his support in publishing the original Romanian edition of this work we ex-

press our gratitude to Silviu Lupescu, director of Polirom Press, who did not hesitate to accept a manuscript with dimensions nearing those of the phenomenon it treated. We thank Cornel Ban for translating into English most of the papers originally written in Romanian.

As organizers, our interest in creating this project was driven by a sense of urgency, concerning both understanding the socialist period and the methods suited to that goal. We fervently believe that understanding that system should be a top priority for historical research in Romania and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, for this analytic effort can contribute much to the further development of the social sciences. Interviews of people still alive are of crucial importance, for they enrich our knowledge in a way that is impossible in studying collectivization in, for example, the Soviet Union, where those who experienced that process have long since died. At the same time, the Communist Party Archives that have been made accessible provide unexpectedly useful information, even if they have a subjective and partisan character and represent a truth that is contestable. Combining interviews with archival work seems to us essential to grasping the complexity of socialism as a form of social and political organization. We hope this volume will prove convincing to our readers and will encourage future research.

NOTES

1 We brought into the project five Romanians from doctoral programs in the US and the Central European University, Budapest. Three were studying with us: Liviu Chelcea and Puiu Lățea with Verdery at the University of Michigan, and Călin Goina with Kligman at UCLA. We also added Cătălin Stoica, then studying at Stanford University, and Constantin Iordachi, from the Central European University.

2 Some of our interviewees had been adolescents or children at the time of collectivization. Their accounts sometimes contained details not present in those of their elders.

3 During the three years of the project, our research themes and the composition of our team underwent some changes. First, Zsuzsanna Török, who had initiated research in Odorhei, withdrew in favor of Sándor Olah, who had greater research experience in that region. Additionally, because Robert Levy's research covered only the first phase of collectivization (1949–1953), we invited Marius Oprea to contribute an article about the remainder of the process. We also asked Eugen Negrici to write about an essential aspect of the collectivization campaign: literary propaganda. Michael Stewart brought Răzvan Stan into his part of the research. Finally, owing to his vast knowledge and research experience concerning this topic, we requested that Professor Dumitru Şandru write a synthesis of the entire collectivization period, in place of his case study on Pechea commune. We wish to thank him here for this additional work. The papers by Negrici and Şandru, plus an additional overview by Octavian Roske, appeared in the original Romanian version of this work but were removed, with regret, to produce a volume of acceptable length for the English translation. We thank these three authors for their generosity in making space for their more junior colleagues.

4 Participants at this workshop were, in addition to ourselves: Sorin Antohi, Liviu Chelcea, Călin Goina, Robert Levy, Octavian Roske, and Smaranda Vultur. We dis-

cussed the broad parameters of the project and potential project participants. Our thanks to the Center for European and Russian Studies (now CEES) at UCLA for supporting this workshop.

5 We thank Michael Stewart for securing funds for these three meetings from the British Academy.

6 Throughout the extended research phase, participants communicated with each other via email or met informally as opportunities arose.

7 Throughout the arduous editorial process, they consulted regularly with us. However, they did virtually all the hard work.

8 The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research is funded by the Title VIII congressional appropriation to the U.S. Department of State; it awarded us contract no. 816-12g. The U.S. National Science Foundation awarded us contract no. BCS 0003891. These grants were administered through the University of Michigan. We thank not only these two organizations, but also Patti Ferullo and Linda Bardeleben at the University of Michigan, and Mary Jane Pica and Linda Schulman at UCLA, for their ongoing assistance. At the beginning of our field research, Gail Kligman was forced to postpone beginning her research; she extends her sincerest appreciation to Robert Huber and Morris Jacobs of the NCEEER for their support as well as to Virgiliu Țărâu for volunteering his generous research assistance during this period.

Introduction

CONSTANTIN IORDACHI
DORIN DOBRINCU

The collectivization of agriculture performed a central role in the process of reconfiguring the political regime and property relations in communist Romania, and more generally in Eastern Europe. Whereas the nationalization of industry and finance was carried out in a relatively short period of time (1948–1952), the process of collectivization was by far the largest political campaign conducted by the communist elites, spanning much of two decades (1949–1962). Collectivization affected Romania's entire rural population, which in 1948 encompassed circa 75% of its total population (or 12 million of Romania's 16 million inhabitants).[1] As collectivization began at a time when the political power of the new regime was still being defined and consolidated, it played a crucial role in institutionalizing and refining the regime's administrative and repressive practices. According to official statistics, by 1952 over 80,000 peasants had been imprisoned for resisting collectivization, 30,000 of which were sentenced in public trials.[2] The transformation of the countryside allowed the "party-state" in-the-making to accumulate vital resources for embarking on forced industrialization. Instrumental in redefining the relations between state and local communities, collectivization enabled the party-state to infiltrate itself deep into the life of the peasantry, controlling the means of production and remuneration in rural areas.

The transformation of the Romanian village not only allowed the party-state to accumulate the economic resources needed for its program of forced industrialization, but it was also instrumental for redefining relations between the state and society. The ideological offensive of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP)[3] aimed to forge the "new man," and to introduce "class struggle" by fighting the rich peasants (called *chiaburi* in Romanian, equivalent to the Soviet term *kulaks*, see the Glossary of Terms). This led to the restructuring of social, political and economic relations in the rural world. With the goal of building a socialist economy, the party-state penetrated the life of rural communities and institutionalized its control over production and revenues. From private owners and independent producers, peasants were transformed into *lumpenproletariat,*[4] an underclass enrolled in socialist collective farms—called *Gospodării Agricole Colective* or *GAC* (Collective Agricultural Farms, see the Glossary of Terms)—and put to work in the service of building the socialist utopia in rural areas.[5]

Within the party, debates over collectivization strategies led to the polarization of competing factions, forcing them to define their loyalties. This aggravated the power struggle that took place during 1952–1953, and ended with ousting the Ana Pauker faction.[6] In addition to its implications for domestic policy, collectivization was an important test for the legitimization of Romanian communist elites in their relations with Moscow, as well as for delimiting their economic dependency and political autonomy.

The campaign to collectivize was an important part of the process of Sovietizing rural areas. Numerous delegations of Soviet technicians visited Romania in order to convince peasants to abandon their traditional way of life and to adopt the Soviet model, while Romanian peasants traveled to the USSR to learn more about the superiority of Soviet agriculture. The effects of collectivization continued well beyond the 1950s into the post-communist period, when decollectivization became a central component of the transformation of property relations and state authority in the rural areas, through the restitution of collectivized land to its former owners.[7]

Despite its profound long-term sociopolitical implications, collectivization in Romania has not been a subject of comprehensive research. During the Cold War and the post-communist decades, issues pertaining to the rural world in general, and to collectivization in particular, have been studied only to the extent they touched upon central themes of the official historiography. These included political repression and resistance to the communist take-over, and strategies of economic modernization the regime employed in order to catch up with the West.

The present volume results from an ambitious research project aimed at addressing collectivization in its full complexity, as a core aspect of the establishment of the communist regime in Romania and not as a mere footnote to research on urbanization and industrialization. The volume is conceived as an integrated and interdisciplinary collective work, bringing together historians, anthropologists, sociologists, legal experts and literary critics from Romania, the United States and the United Kingdom. Unlike previous works on the subject, this volume deals with the entire period of the collectivization campaign in Romania, from 1949 to 1962. It also covers much of Romania's territory, with at least two researchers in every historical province.

Since the process of collectivization varied across space and time, we have selected a broad sample of research sites differing in religious and ethnic composition, economy, terrain, date of collectivization, and other related variables. Several of the project participants (Robert Levy and Linda Miller, in this volume, alongside other project participants Eugen Negrici and Octavian Roske)[8] focused on national level policies and practices (i.e., property legislation, requisitions, propaganda, and debates about the form collectivization should take); the others conducted case studies, working across a broad span of communities and experiences. These case studies cover a wide range of local practices that characterized collectivization in various places. They include the first and last villages collectivized in Romania; ethnically and religiously homogeneous villages as well as multi-ethnic

villages inhabited by Romanians, Germans, Hungarians, Roma or Russians; homogeneous Orthodox communities, as well as communities including Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, Protestants, neo-Protestants and Old Believers. This volume also focuses on villages of settlers, colonists and deportees; villages that mounted fierce resistance to collectivization at the risk of triggering armed repression by government forces and villages in which no active resistance occurred; villages whose economy was dominated by grain cultivation and villages with a mixed economy, in which cereals co-existed alongside fishing or animal husbandry; villages in which collectivization was an economic success and villages in which it was a failure. This selection of cases allowed us to integrate several key dimensions of collectivization, such as religion, nationality and ecological conditions, into a unitary analytical framework. The following sections of this Introduction present the state of research on collectivization.

1. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON COLLECTIVIZATION IN ROMANIA

Due to domestic political restrictions, censorship, and lack of access to archival sources, the study of collectivization in Eastern Europe is still in its infancy. For many decades, research on the topic was conducted only in foreign academic settings, mainly in the United States and Western Europe; in the region, notable progress is being made in the post-communist period. To date, the few available works on the topic have concentrated on the history of the process in Soviet Union[9] or, to a lesser extent, on various national case studies.[10] Several syntheses have also explored the general features of collectivization in the former Soviet camp from a comparative perspective.[11]

The historiography on collectivization in Romania does not differ from this general pattern, its evolution reflecting the shifts in Eastern European studies that took place during the Cold War. In the 1950s, scholarship focused mainly on the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, the ensuing destruction of interwar elites and the gradual implementation of the Soviet social and political model,[12] all viewed through the lens of the emerging "totalitarian school" of analyzing the communist regime.[13] In this context, pioneering research on collectivization focused on the political repression accompanying the process of communist take-over in the rural world. Collectivization was regarded as integral to consolidating the communist system of repression, but the social and political dimensions of this process were not an object of research in their own right.

The process of de-Stalinization initiated in the socialist camp after 1953 challenged historians to reconsider the analytical utility of the concept of "totalitarianism" for understanding communist societies, emphasizing instead the plural nature of the regime's political agency and the influence of mediating factors in political life.[14] The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, as well as the diverse strategies of legitimization adopted by Eastern European elites, highlighted manifest differ-

ences between the Soviet model of development and the political regimes in various Eastern European communist countries. In Romania, a major turning point was the country's gradual retreat from Soviet foreign policy, which commenced in 1958 with the withdrawal of Soviet troops. It continued through 1964, when the Romanian communist leadership rejected the Valev Plan, a Soviet-proposed economic "division of labor" inside the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECOM). To adopt this plan would have confined Romania to the role of an agricultural supplier for COMECOM more industrialized countries. The Romanian government rejected this Soviet initiative and issued the 21 April 1964 Declaration, which was construed as a nationalist and implicitely anti-Soviet statement. Culminating this policy of relative independence, in August 1968 the new Communist leader of Romania, Nicolae Ceauşescu (1965–1989), denounced the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Romania's increasing domestic autonomy and political consolidation contributed to shifting the scholarly agenda toward research on the social origins of the communist regime, as well as the process by which a regime that had initially been seen as an occupation force was now "going native" or becoming "autochthonized." In an effort to identify the domestic sources of communism in Eastern Europe, and to account for the consolidation of peoples' democracies in the region, scholarship in the late 1950s and early 1960s focused on the "peasant question" and rural relations. In Romanian studies, Henry Roberts produced an insightful book on rural relations, drawing upon the scholarly tradition created by David Mitrany during the interwar period.[15] Nevertheless, writing at a time when the process of collectivization was under way and relying on fragmentary data, Roberts could only provide a preliminary assessment of the economic and sociopolitical outcomes of this process. Although he agreed that "something had to be done" to pull Romanian post-war agriculture out of its crisis, and that the economic critiques of Romanian communists concerning the plight of agriculture were "generally valid," Roberts advised that the prospects for successful collectivization were grim, given the Soviet experience.[16]

During the 1960s and 1970s, this research agenda came under the mantle of modernization theory, a hegemonic concept used to describe the economic strategies of communist and other "backward" countries to catch up with the US and Western Europe. Drawing on Cyril Edwin Black's theory, which defined Eastern European communist regimes as important stages in the teleological process of world modernization, Philip Eidelberg contended in a study on the 1907 peasant uprising that the origins of collectivization in Romania could be found in the peasants' cooperatives and village associations launched in the beginning of the twentieth century.[17] In general, modernization scholars stressed the importance of socialist urbanization processes, regional integration and economic relations between the socialist bloc and the capitalist economic system. Many scholars focused on the Leninist answer given by communist elites on the subject of economic dependence, and how that answer related to interwar political and ideological debates on this topic.[18] Collectivization was thus approached not as a

socio-political phenomenon worthy of scholarly attention in itself, but as an appendix to broader social and political processes.

The collapse of modernization strategies and the Ceauşescu regime's major shift in domestic policy from relative "liberalization" (1965–1971) to a "cultural revolution" following the "Chinese model" again altered the research agenda in Romanian studies. Scholars now paid greater attention to the regime's cultural policies and "political culture," particularly the syncretism of communism and nationalism into a nationalist-communist ideology. At the end of the 1970s, the study of communism was radically challenged by a generation of anthropologists who conducted fieldwork in Central and Eastern Europe.[19] Their commitment to new theoretical and methodological perspectives ushered in a new research agenda focused on the study of culture, time and space, social relations and ownership structures as well as national identity. Anthropologists also made a convincing case for the value of working directly on fundamental texts by immersing these texts in their local social and cultural contexts through extended field research.[20] One of their foils was the "totalitarian model" used for understanding communist societies. This model assumed relationships of complete dependence of the local on the central, as well as the omnipotence of party and state agents. In contrast, anthropologists emphasized practices of domination, dispersion and negotiation of power at various local and regional levels. In the long run, the anthropological "challenge" brought to life a new research agenda aimed at the interdisciplinary study of society, and sensitive to issues only partially addressed by previous research, such as the agrarian question, social relations in rural communities and the collectivization of agriculture.

In *Transylvanian Villagers*, for example, Katherine Verdery analyzed the history of interethnic relations in Transylvania, a former province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire incorporated into Greater Romania after World War I. Verdery highlighted the sharp socio-political competition among various ethnic groups as a phenomenon typical for "agrarian societies embarked on bureaucratic modernization."[21] Based on her findings, Verdery challenged the usefulness of the classical modernization paradigm that dominated scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s. She also reassessed the economic, social and political implications of collectivization for the subordination of Romanian rural society.[22]

Two widely cited studies authored by Gail Kligman, *Căluş* and *Wedding of the Dead*, emphasized the role of traditional cultural practices in maintaining village and regional identities despite state efforts to turn peasants into the "new men" of the socialist order.[23] Kligman also investigated how forms of cultural expression acted as symbolic instruments of resistance against the state. Notably, cultural rituals practiced during the Ceauşescu regime in the village of Ieud (Maramureş county), such as poetry composition, offered peasants the means to preserve a parallel culture and record the village's unwritten yet remarkably tumultuous history.

Using data collected between 1974 and 1984 from fieldwork in the village of Hârseni (in *Ţara Oltului*, Braşov county),[24] David Kideckel challenged the view

that collectivization was a unitary, centralized and homogeneous process. By contrast, he approached it using theories about "complex society" to map out local power relations and villagers' individual and collective strategies for resisting regime policies. Kideckel focused on the ways in which local communities adjusted to postwar political changes, reinterpreting and even influencing government policies to accommodate their needs and traditions.

With a few remarkable exceptions, domestic historical writing during the communist period shunned these international research endeavors. Generally, scholarly interest in rural issues, and collectivization in particular, remained rather scant. For many decades, Costin Murgescu was the only scholar to address the 1945 agrarian reform, in a study of limited analytical value written during the Stalinist years.[25] As for the few studies on collectivization per se, they were heavily censored and some were sheer propaganda.[26] Much more insightful was subsequent research on collective farms, such as the work of sociologist Mihail Cernea.[27] The same situation characterized the study of the communist regime, in general. The only important exception was Pavel Câmpeanu's clandestine work, in which he proposed the concept of "war Stalinism" to describe the Romanian communist regime in the 1980s.[28]

The liberalization of scholarly life in Romania after 1989 gave a novel impetus to research the history of the communist period, resulting in numerous interdisciplinary projects spanning anthropology, sociology, political science and history. Yet not all aspects of Romanian communism received the same scholarly attention. Power struggles within the Romanian Communist Party (RCP), the history of the Ceauşescu regime (notably its domestic policies during the 1980s), the personality cult surrounding Ceauşescu, communist foreign policy and the situation of ethnic minorities became the favorite topics of students of Romanian communism. At the same time, synthetic research on the history of the Romanian communist regime, and on agrarian relations, is still sorely needed.[29]

Furthermore, despite being a springboard for the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, the period of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's rule enjoyed much less scholarly attention than that of Ceauşescu's post-1965 regime; the few existing studies on this period having been published relatively recently.[30] Thus, political scientist Stelian Tănase drew on elite theories developed by Robert Michels and Giovanni Sartori, as well as insights from the modernization theory developed by Cyril Black, to study the communist strategies of political legitimation and economic development. Tănase dealt with collectivization only partially, in the context of the more general process of economic modernization and political transformation.[31] British historian Dennis Deletant studied the Romanian Gulag and the repressive policies of the Gheorghiu-Dej regime,[32] and touched on the history of collectivization when discussing political repression.[33]

Bogdan Tănăsescu was among the first scholars in the post-1989 period to address the complexity of the collectivization process. Tănăsescu argued that this process was a tragedy for most of the rural population, as many peasants were offered the stark choice of having to migrate to cities or become rural proletari-

ans.[34] His book, however, offers only a preliminary account of collectivization, hampered by methodological limitations. It gathers data mostly from RCP propaganda material and the Party's official daily, *Scânteia* (spelled *Scînteia* between 1953 and 1965), but uses archival documents sparingly and oral history interviews not at all.

The work of Dumitru Şandru is a major contribution to the history of agrarian issues, focusing mainly on the 1921 land reform and the interwar situation of the rural populace.[35] After 1989, he took up the 1945 agrarian reform as well as the policies that preceded the onset of collectivization.[36] In some of his later work, Şandru gradually expanded his focus to collectivization issues—a difficult task, given the vast archival research this topic demands and limited access to key archives.

Another strand of scholarship consists of regionally focused studies of rural issues, including the history of collectivization.[37] Recent works include Sándor Oláh's study of collectivization and resistance techniques deployed by ethnic Szekler villagers from Valea Homoroadelor, Marian Cojoc's short monograph on collectivization in Dobrogea between 1945 and 1957,[38] and a number of Ph.D. dissertations.[39]

In addition to these pioneering contributions, important evidence on collectivization has been unearthed from biographies and memoirs written by key political actors of the Gheorghiu-Dej regime.[40] Thus, Robert Levy's biography of Ana Pauker, a leading communist official in charge of supervising early collectivization, argues that she was far from being the Stalinist hardliner her enemies within the Party portrayed her as after 1952, and actually endorsed a moderate approach to collectivization that departed from the Soviet model.[41]

Aggravating the slow pace of research on collectivization is the scarcity of published documents on this topic. To date, several edited volumes have been published containing documents about collectivization, notably focused on its political and legislative aspects,[42] or on the campaign in specific regions.[43] In addition, documents on the repressive instruments used in collectivizing were published in books and journals with a broader historical focus.[44] Other sources of information can be found in works that record oral history in "life history" transcripts.[45] Finally, one ought also to mention short case studies on collectivization published in journals focusing on the memory of repression and resistance during the communist period, such as *Memoria, Analele Sighet, Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Orală* or *Arhivele Totalitarismului*,[46] even if the scholarly value of these contributions is uneven.

During the 1990s, a new strand of scholarship emerged that is more sophisticated both in its approach and in its methodology. Drawing on Jan Myrdal's research on a village in communist China,[47] Aurora Liiceanu conducted research in the village of Surani (Prahova county) that sought to reconstitute collective history based on life stories, while conceptualizing the researcher's role as "auxiliary" to the reader. Some of the stories she collected address collectivization.[48] A volume edited by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi and Gérard Althabe investigates two vil-

lages that represent diametrically opposed symbolic loci in the Romanian context—Scorniceşti (Ceauşescu's birthplace) and Nucşoara (a hotbed of anticommunist armed resistance during early communism). The authors follow these villages from communism to post-communism. They conclude that the differences between the villages are not structural and that both provide crucial evidence on the social engineering carried out by the communist regime for half a century. In both villages, people appear uniformly nostalgic for communism, trapped in the social mechanisms created by the former regime while exposed to the vagaries of local criminal and nepotistic networks.[49]

The history of collectivization has also been tackled by scholars who researched historical patterns of agricultural collectivization when dealing with the post-communist restitution of land rights.[50] The most comprehensive analysis of decollectivization in post-communist Transylvania and its profound effects on rural communities is Katherine Verdery's suggestively titled book *The Vanishing Hectare*.[51] Although collectivization itself is only briefly addressed, Verdery's study provides a detailed account of the organization of property under socialism.

In conclusion, before 1989, work on collectivization suffered from ideological constraints and the difficulty of accessing primary sources. For decades, it was literally impossible to conduct archival research or field interviews on this topic.[52] After the collapse of the communist regime, scholars gradually gained access to archives, making in-depth study of collectivization at the local and national levels possible. Particularly important in this respect are the holdings of the National Historical Archival Fund (*Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale*) and its county branches, the Archives of the Romanian Intelligence Service (*Arhivele Serviciului Român de Informații*), the National Council for the Study of *Securitate* Archives (*Consiliul Național Pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității*), the Department of Military Courts (*Direcția Instanțelor Militare*), as well as regional military tribunals. Village archives may also prove useful in cases where their inventory has not yet been moved to public archival funds. At the same time, oral history—the history of live testimonies and narratives—constitutes an important source of evidence for researchers, facilitating a more complex and holistic view of collectivization.

2. COLLECTIVIZATION AND SCHOLARSHIP ON THE ROMANIAN COMMUNIST REGIME: TOWARDS A NEW RESEARCH AGENDA

The issues addressed in this volume are part of a wider interdisciplinary research agenda on state, identity and property relations as tackled by historians, political scientists, anthropologists and sociologists.[53] Scholars have defined ownership as being simultaneously: 1) a form of organizing state power; 2) a cultural system based on individual and collective identity; and 3) a set of social relations among persons with respect to objects.[54] Recent political science and anthropological research has emphasized the ways in which identity is shaped and constituted by

ownership over things, observing that changes in the system of ownership may cause changes in how the person is conceptualized.[55] Similarly, we consider the study of individual identity essential to understanding changes in the system of ownership.

This volume seeks to apply these theoretical approaches to the study of collectivization in Romania, a process that offers a dramatic example of the de-privatization and temporary communalization of property rights over land.[56] The process of collectivization radically reconfigured the social and political relations entailed in these rights. Therefore, it is an essential process for understanding the simultaneous transformation of people, social relations and the state during the communist period.

To cover this complex research agenda, the papers in this volume address four main themes: 1) property transformations; 2) the transformation of persons; 3) the making of the party-state; and 4) the relationship between archival and oral histories. The first three themes address theoretical aspects of collectivization and its profound influence on social and political structures at the local and regional levels, examining how local phenomena played into national changes in the political regime. The fourth theme comprises reflections on the methodological implications and interdisciplinary character of the project.

In relation to these themes, we have focused on a series of topics, as outlined by Katherine Verdery and Gail Kligman in their project proposal:[57]

The study of *property transformations* undertaken in this volume includes: 1) the investigation of new forms of ownership and their impact on the creation of new ownership relations; 2) the general features and main actors of collectivization; 3) the legal and political instruments used for expropriating property and its transfer to third parties; and 4) the effects of the main productive economic resources (land, cattle), environmental resources (terrain of various kinds, hydrologic networks) and ethnic resources (multi-ethnic villages, with Romanian, Hungarian and German populations) on collectivization strategies.

The study of the *transformation of persons* includes: 1) the stages in the transformation of various forms and relations of ownership and their effects on the collective imagination; 2) the villagers' perceptions of interpersonal relations (with kin, people from other villages and outsiders); 3) their feelings towards kin who join collective farms, the village community and various organizations, such as the GAC; 4) the effects of collectivization on relationships among people; 5) the types of relations that were strengthened or destroyed; 6) the impact of collectivization on ideas about the person; 7) the social values it affected (e.g., work ethics, social status and individuals' values) and social responsibilities or representations of the past (reputation, ancestors and family traditions); 8) the links between collectivization propaganda and memories of the past; 9) shifts in authority relations and the (re)making of social hierarchies in public and private relationships; 10) the villagers' relations with local, regional and national government authorities.

Collectivization affected not only peasants, but also the Party cadres who contributed to the formation of the new party-state. To analyze the nexus of *party* and

state, our volume explores the following aspects: 1) the cadres who participated in collectivization and the features of the party-state they were building; 2) evidence regarding bureaucratic procedures (or attempts made to institutionalize them) or the arbitrariness of the collectivization process; 3) the study of the cadres' work reports in order to determine whether they acted according to a specific plan or merely improvised as they went along; 4) evidence of their manipulation of ethnic and religious divisions where these existed, in their practices of *chiaburization* (i.e., classifying rich peasants as *chiaburi* and subjecting them to a regime of social-economical and political discrimination), and the imposition of food requisitions; 5) the investigation of new social categories that local cadres created through their policies; 6) communication patterns between local, regional and central authorities; 7) coercive or disciplinary measures issued by the Party's upper echelons and enforced by the local Party apparatus against various kinds of cadres. In order to establish formal bureaucratic organizations, cadres were often deployed to areas in which they had no personal connections. Did this policy hinder them from carrying out their tasks? Did local communities attempt to integrate them into local social relations, or exclude them, and how? What evidence exists concerning social relations established between Party cadres and various levels of the local administration? One can hypothesize that these relations became the basis for personal networks that gave cadres access to the privileges the Party bureaucracy enjoyed. Consequently, in this book we have tried to answer the question: did people have an explicit understanding of the state as an entity?

Understanding *how history was made and remade* raises many methodological questions. For instance, it is generally accepted that written materials, especially archival sources, constitute reliable evidence. By contrast, oral narratives enjoy less scholarly endorsement due to their subjective and selective nature. The history of the communist period, however, questions this view, as the written materials are often more explicitly ideological in nature than is true elsewhere. These materials convey information about the perceptions and the political maneuverings of their producers instead of the reality of everyday life. This is why, for the purposes of this study, archival materials need to be analyzed through a special hermeneutic lens. In general, they are less trustworthy than oral narratives, although they remain without doubt a major source for reconstructing the authorities' ideological outlook.

Even oral narratives are "suspect" and should be carefully contextualized. We conducted our interviews after the collective farms had been dismantled, a fact that invites respondents to denigrate the entire experience, even if it was not uniformly negative. The relationship between oral and archival data was intensely debated in the meetings of our team of researchers. The question of whether the history of collectivization, as recorded in official documents, coincides with or differs from history as individuals experienced and remembered it lies at the heart of this methodological conundrum. Several studies in this volume elaborate on the relationship between archival and oral histories.

In this volume, collectivization is understood as a process through which changes in property rights led to changes in social relations, villagers' self-image and their view of society. In turn, these transformations simultaneously constituted and institutionalized the authority of the communist regime. This central argument runs through the three distinct parts of this book's structure: 1) general aspects of collectivization; 2) center and periphery in the collectivization campaign; and 3) collectivization and the transformation of social relations.

Part I provides general overviews of the main stages of collectivization and its implication for the legal system of land property. Robert Levy focuses on the first wave of the socialist transformation of agriculture (1949–1953), which largely coincided with a period during which the entire communist camp—barring Tito's Yugoslavia—felt Moscow's pressure to form collectives swiftly. Levy divides this period into five distinct stages: 1) March 1949–February 1950; 2) February 1950–June 15, 1950; 3) June 15, 1950–end of September 1950; 4) October 1950–mid-January 1952; and 5) mid-January 1952–April 1953. These stages reflect conflicting political messages from Bucharest, power struggles among rival factions, as well as hesitations about imitating the Soviet model too closely. The fact that, whenever domestic communist elites sought to slow collectivization down, Soviet pressure forced a resumption of their pace, was common to all these stages. Nevertheless, elite opposition to Soviet templates can help explain policy shifts, the contradictory measures taken during the first period of the collectivization campaign in Romania and acts of peasant resistance.

Marius Oprea covers the final battle for collectivization waged between 1953 and 1962, focusing on the higher levels of political decision-making and on implementation strategies. He argues that collectivization was not economically but politically grounded for Romanian communist leaders. They were entirely uninterested in the welfare of rural communities, caring only about subjecting peasants to the ideological imperatives of the age. This reveals how politically dependent Romanian elites were on the Soviet Union. The author identifies three main stages, the first lasting from summer 1953 to December 1955, the second from January 1956 to the end of 1957, and the third from 1958 to 1962. During the first stage, called the "stagnation period," the pace of collectivization was slow, as Party elites hoped to consolidate existing collective farms first. The second stage was characterized by a certain relaxation of the campaign, due to the 1956 Hungarian revolution and fears of large-scale peasant resistance. Although political repression and control were intensified, the actual implementation of collectivization strategies was postponed. Finally, the third stage began in 1958, when the regime prepared to resume the campaign following a successful experiment in the region of Galați. By 1958 collectivization was again in full swing. The endpoint of the process was the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party (June–July 1961) and a speech given by Gheorghiu-Dej in April 1962, when the Romanian leader proclaimed "the completion of the socialist transformation of agriculture."

Drawing on a wide array of legal documents (e.g., laws, decrees, regulations), Linda Miller examines the legal status of land property in the countryside and the mechanisms through which land was transferred to collective farms. Her study addresses three issues: 1) the regulation of property rights in the pre-communist period and the extent to which elements of pre-communist law were implicated in the collectivization campaign; 2) the regulation of collective rights over land, and of land transfers from peasants to collective farms; and 3) the legal significance of the concept of "socialist ownership." Miller contends that during the collectivization period, the Romanian Civil Code developed concepts of socialist property collectivization in two directions. First, the code distinguished between socialist ownership, which referred to the ownership rights of the state, and cooperative ownership, which referred to property rights of cooperative associations. The former was hierarchically superior to the latter in the legal system, as socialist ownership enjoyed a number of special attributes: it was absolute, exclusive, subject to no statutes of limitation, inalienable and immune to seizure. As in the Soviet Union, this hierarchy led to the distortion of cooperative property into a form of state property. Unlike in the Soviet Union, in Romania cooperative property had in theory the characteristics of private ownership. In practice, however, state intervention in the activity of collective farms transformed their property into a masked form of state ownership.

Part II focuses on relations between the center and the periphery during collectivization, covering historical regions that are relatively ethnically homogeneous (Moldova), as well as multi-ethnic regions (Dobrogea, Transylvania and the Banat). Constantin Iordachi analyzes collectivization in Dobrogea, the first region where the campaign was declared complete, in 1957. The author argues that the remarkable speed with which collectivization was carried out in that province was due to several factors, such as the region's geographical and demographic traits; the impact of the war on its ethnic structure and its rural social environment; official propaganda disguising how the campaign was actually proceeding; and the elites' realization that they could turn this region into a showcase of agricultural modernization for the rest of the country. For that reason in particular, the elite saw Dobrogea's successful collectivization and agricultural development as a matter of top priority; central resources were mobilized accordingly. The regime's propaganda framed Dobrogea as a case of socio-economic metamorphosis from "the country's most backward province" into the region with the highest standard of living for rural people. Iordachi selects as a test case the village of Jurilovca (Constanța region, currently Tulcea county). He shows how collectivization transformed the community of Russian Old Believers (called *Lipoveni*) in Jurilovca from a closed ethno-religious fishing community into a semi-open one, home to mixed marriages, bilingualism and economic dependence on the state.

Smaranda Vultur's article explores the collectivization process in the Banat region, using the village of Tomnatic as a case study. Inhabited mainly by ethnic Germans, Tomnatic's collective was formed early (1950) through massive repres-

sion that transferred private property into state hands, and sought to destroy peasants or render them vulnerable while the Party assumed administrative power and control over society. Combining contemporary villagers' oral accounts with reports sent by local authorities to higher Party echelons, the author argues that harsh political repression and the nationalization of property weakened the social texture of peasant life, enabling the Party to take control of administrative and leadership positions in the village. The study focuses on the instruments utilized to make peasants sign up for the collective farm: expropriation, deportation, the provocation of inter-ethnic tensions, the deployment of "class enemy" arguments, and the socio-economic destruction of the *chiaburi*. Vultur also elaborates on the role ethnicity played in the process, highlighting the Party's instrumentalization of class and ethnic differences and, in response, the attempt of ethnic Germans to manipulate ethnic categories so as to escape political repression.

Gail Kligman looks at the dynamics of collectivization in the village of Ieud, Maramureş, particularly at the first stage of the process. Using extensive archival and field research, she argues that collectivization in Maramureş was closely tied to the diverse forms of peasant resistance against the communist regime. Here, it had a punitive character, disciplining the population of Greek Catholics and anti-communists who opposed the changes being implemented. This explains why Ieud was the first collective farm established in Maramureş, despite unfavorable economic conditions resulting from the poor quality of its soil. Collectivization was used to discipline the populace wherever communist authorities perceived a "bourgeois" past that might obstruct a socialist future. It is unsurprising, then, that Ieud, with its various political and religious "reactionaries," held pride of place among communities of this kind, experiencing a very sharp class struggle. Kligman also addresses the relationships among collectivization, memory, and the rewriting of history.

Virgiliu Țârău offers a comparative analysis of collectivization in the Turda and Aiud districts, both of them located in the Cluj region at the time. The author tracks the strategies employed by the regime on three levels of authority (region, district, and commune), which allows him to identify the responsibilities specific to each level. The first part of the chapter examines the design of collectivization as constrained by the activities of regional and district authorities. The second part compares collectivization in a pair of neighboring villages situated in two separate districts: Rimetea (Turda district) and Măgina (Aiud district). The villages differ in their ethnic and religious composition (Romanian and Hungarian, and Orthodox and Catholic/Protestant, respectively), as well as in their forms of ownership. This comparative approach enables the author to reconstitute the different local contexts in which collectivization took place, its local specificity, and trends in the emergence of new rural identities. By using three levels of analysis (i.e., region, district, and village), he sheds light on the relationship between the activities of authorities, both central and local, and the concrete measures taken to collectivize the two villages. Along the way, the author seeks to identify who is to blame for the failure of collectivization, when, and to what degree.

Sándor Oláh's article investigates collectivization in the district of Odorhei, situated in what was formerly known as the Autonomous Hungarian Region. Inhabited mainly by ethnic Hungarians, the area enjoyed a high degree of administrative autonomy after 1952. This case study reveals the ebbs and flows of collectivization at local and national levels. Oláh looks at how the introduction of the concept of *chiabur* influenced resistance and the manipulation of class differences, showing that, although several collective farms were established in the district during 1950–1953, most villages successfully opposed the ideological onslaught and repression. By contrast, Oláh's analysis of collectivization's second stage finds that resisting villagers had become psychologically and economically exhausted, their households impoverished from a decade of state repression. As a consequence, they finally gave up. The author argues that ethnicity and regional autonomy were not directly relevant to the collectivization process, as Hungarian elites in the district proved to be loyal executors of central directives.

Răzvan Stan and Michael Stewart look at state attempts to enforce collectivization and constitute communist authority structures in the village of Poiana Sibiului, a community of shepherds located in the Sibiu region. In contrast with villagers in plains and plateau areas, these mountain shepherds successfully resisted collectivization through a series of stratagems specific to the opportunities inherent in their form of livelihood, and were even able to accumulate impressive fortunes during the communist period. This was mainly due to the geography of the village, the mobility of their property (flocks of sheep could be easily hidden), their principal occupation (transhumant pasturing) and their historically developed patterns of adaptation. The communist attempt to establish an agricultural association in Poiana Sibiului was therefore a complete failure. Although the requisition/procurement system was central to shepherds' relationship with the state, the shepherds of Poiana deployed several successful strategies to maintain ownership over most of their resources, manipulating the rigidity of state agencies. Moreover, starting in the 1960s, an increasing number of shepherds managed to "hijack" the economic opportunities provided by socialist agriculture, becoming employed in neighboring collective farms and using the members' pastures, fodder and even sheep for their own purposes and needs. The article suggests avenues for analyzing idiosyncratic communities in a comparative fashion. Thus, while Iordachi's study highlights the impact of collectivization on fishermen, Stan and Stewart focus on shepherds, understood as a mobile ensemble of dispersed networks covering the entire country.

Dorin Dobrincu looks at techniques of persuasion, delay and coercion that cadres employed to collectivize the village of Darabani, at the time in the Suceava region. In 1950, Darabani was the first collectivized village in what was then Dorohoi county, and the regime wished to make it a showcase of socialist agriculture. Nonetheless, in the long run, Darabani turned into exactly the opposite. Peasants resisted their incorporation into collective farms for various reasons, such as the weak interaction between regime representatives and the village, and the hope that the regime would collapse as a result of outside intervention (most

probably from the United States, in their view). In addition, Darabani households were not politically or economically vulnerable. Most of them were middle-income households which, although not particularly profitable, generated enough income to cover the modest needs of local peasants. It took the extreme measures of the final collectivization offensive launched in March 1962 (marked by violence, economic and psychological coercion, and rumor-mongering) to conclude the collectivization process in the county. Although the process was officially declared complete in communist Romania on March 16, 1962, two days later the region of Suceava was publicly declared the last region of Romania to have completed the "socialist transformation of agriculture."

Part III of the book explores the relationship between collectivization and the transformation of village social relations. Throughout Romania's modern history, state-peasant relations changed several times, yet it is with the establishment of the communist regime (1945–1947) and the launch of collectivization that this relationship changed most radically. Given the sheer magnitude of the task, the Party had to exert tight control over its myriad activists in the field. It soon became clear that the regime and its grip on power were insufficiently consolidated for early success. Therefore, as a central element in communizing Romania, collectivization was carried out primarily through the interaction between a mass of hard-to-control party activists and a leadership afflicted by factionalism and Moscow's invasive authority.

Drawing on these tensions, Katherine Verdery investigates collectivization in the village of Aurel Vlaicu, Hunedoara region, by looking at a form of coercion widely used by the regime. This was *chiaburization* (*kulakization*), or labeling people as *chiaburi* (a pejorative term meaning peasant exploiters), which might later be followed by their declassification, or removal from *chiabur* lists, and reinstatement into their communities.[58] Verdery argues that local representatives of the regime interpreted the concept of *chiabur* differently from the central Party leadership. She points to a "dialogic" relationship between peasants and the state, manifest especially when peasants themselves tried to manipulate the definition of *chiabur*. They did so mainly by filing complaints, some of which successfully resulted in their removal from the lists.

Whereas collective farms have been generally proven economically inefficient, the exceptions to this rule deserve analytical investigation. One such case is the village of Sântana, in the Arad region. Călin Goina's study of its collective farm reveals that this preponderantly German village, already wealthy before the end of World War II, was an example of economic success after collectivization. The land and the houses of the local Germans were seized by the state; many were deported and their property turned over to young families of ethnic Romanians brought into the village from mountainous and hilly regions. Consequently, these settlers began their life in the village dependent on the state, rather than the traditional authority of their original villages. Some of them joined the Party and established a collective farm in 1950. In the following years, the burden of requisition quotas made most landowners, as well as ethnic Germans without other

options, join the collective farm. No violence was used to achieve collectivization in Sântana. The new collective farm proved to be an economic success, due mainly to its adjustment to the socialist economy's possibilities. Goina insightfully describes how, in the long run, collectivization deeply affected the social structures and value system of the village community.

Dobrosloveni, a community in the southwest of Romania (Olt county, in the Craiova region at the time), is the site of Daniel Lăţea's case study. The author describes and interprets various forms of action (and inaction) by peasants and state representatives during collectivization. At first, a few peasants joined the GAC because they had older bureaucratic relations with the state, while others took the step because they were poor—a status explainable not simply in terms of social stratification, but also in relation to local definitions of morality. Making use of a rich store of tactics and strategies, the majority of Dobrosloveni's peasants strove to delay the moment of joining the GAC, or, after they joined, to redefine the very idea of a "collective." The issue of memory is significant in that the peasants retrospectively appreciate precisely those moments of delay, and pass over other occasions when they had to bow down before the state. The author views this forgetfulness as being essentially positive, suggesting that aside from its enabling villagers to reproduce an acceptable social profile before others, their strategic refusal to recall the state's excesses—such as personal humiliations endured during the time of collectivization—is tantamount to refusing to invoke state representatives except as agents of the monopoly on legitimate violence.

In her study of collectivization in the Szekler village of Corund, at the time in the Hungarian Autonomous Region, Julianna Bodó argues that, although the process was non-violent, it represented a massive act of aggression against the social prestige—and therefore the sense of the self—of most villagers. Party activists from outside managed to recruit socially marginal Corunders, who radically altered social hierarchies in the village and humiliated the majority. Others in the village soon understood that the most effective resistance strategy available was to keep a certain distance from these local leaders and to deprecate collectivization inside the family and in the village. Bodó also shows that relations between villagers and local Party elites were more concealed, and more profound, than those between villagers and non-Corund authorities. In general, however, Party elites grew socially distant from villagers. Awareness of this process adversely affected villagers' image of collectivization and the new political elite. Collectivization was only completed in Corund in 1962, but to this day, villagers have negative memories of both the process and the collective farm itself.

Liviu Chelcea explores collectivization in the Bărăgan plain, also known as Romania's breadbasket. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this sparsely populated region of large estates served as one of Romania's "internal frontiers," hosting several state-sponsored waves of agricultural settlers. Chelcea focuses on the case of Reviga, Ialomiţa county in the Bucharest region, whose history may be considered a metonym of the story of Bărăgan. Chelcea points out that many colonists in Reviga possessed two households, one in the mountains,

their region of origin, and another in the Bărăgan plain. Pointing out that Reviga was collectivized relatively late (1958–1959) compared to neighboring villages, the study challenges the common perception that settler communities are less likely to be attached to their newly acquired land than those who have been there for a longer period of time. Using interview data, Chelcea argues that late collectivization had little to do with the nature of settler communities. Instead, it had to do with geographic isolation and the weakness of the local state apparatus involved in collectivizing.

Coming from the position of neo-institutionalist sociology, Cătălin Augustin Stoica approaches collectivization as it related to the institutionalization of the communist party-state, and the project of creating the "new socialist man." Postwar changes, Stoica argues, de-coupled new institutional forms from the practices adopted to implement them. Consequently, the effects of collectivization were momentous: the new forms of collective ownership were delegitimated and the very authority of the new regime was ultimately undermined. Stoica offers a comparative analysis of two villages, Vadu Roşca and Năneşti, situated in two different communes in Vrancea county, then located in the Galați region. He shows how the collectivization campaign and the communist state's lack of legitimacy led to a peasant rebellion in Vadu Roşca in December 1957, followed by brutal repression. By contrast, peasants in Năneşti did not openly oppose collectivization, as they were convinced that resistance would be futile. Beyond these visible differences, however, neither the party nor collectivization enjoyed any legitimacy in these villages throughout the entire communist period.

To date, the relative scarcity of available primary and secondary sources on the topic prevented scholars from fully integrating the Romanian campaign of collectivization into a comprehensive regional comparison. Based on the findings of this research project, Constantin Iordachi and Katherine Verdery provide a general overview of the process of Romanian collectivization in a regional context. They attempt to identify similarities and differences with other analogous processes that took place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. They also highlight the paramount importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the comparative study of communist regimes.

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Note on the English edition: the original Romanian volume was published as: Dorin Dobrincu, Constantin Iordachi, (eds.), *Țărănimea şi puterea: Procesul de colectivizare a agriculturii în România, 1949–1962* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2005). Due to space limitations, the chapters by Dumitru Şandru on the history of the agrarian question in Romania, by Octavian Roske on forced collection quotas and requisition policies, and by Liviu Negrici on propaganda for collectivization in the socialist literature could not be included in the English translation (see the Foreword, note 3). The chapters by Călin Goina, Constantin Iordachi, and Daniel Lățea have been revised for this edition, and a concluding essay, a chronology of the collectivization campaign, a glossary of terms, and a brief review of the villages researched have been added.

The editors would like to thank everyone who assisted in the preparation of the volume for publication. We are grateful, first and foremost, to Katherine Verdery and Gail Kligman, who took an active part in the editorial process—we indeed formed an editorial team. Katherine Verdery made corrections throughtout the manuscript, compiled the index together with Constantin Iordachi, and, with Cornel Ban, co-translated the chapters by Julianna Bodó, Sándor Oláh, Liviu Chelcea, Cătălin Augustin Stoica, and Smaranda Vultur. Gail Kligman co-translated, with Liana Grancea, the chapters by Virgiliu Țărău and Călin Goina. Linda Miller co-translated, with Cornel Ban, the chapter by Dorin Dobrincu, and, with additional assistance from Robert Levy, the chapter by Marius Oprea.

NOTES

1 Dan Cătănuş and Octavian Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Dimensiunea politică*, vol. I: 1949–1953 (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 14.

2 Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole şi cuvântări, iunie 1961–decembrie 1962* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1962), 206. Top-secret documents classified by the *Securitate* in the late 1950s and early 1960s give national statistics for repressive measures in the 1951–1952 period: 34,738 peasants were arrested, of which 22,008 were *chiaburi*, 7,226 had medium-size households, and 5,504 owned small farms (ASRI, Fond "D," file 7778, vol. 3, 83–91; vol. 27, 1–10).

3 The Romanian Communist Party (*Partidul Comunist Român*, or PCR) was founded in 1921. In 1924, the party was outlawed due to its revolutionary political activity, its total subordination to Moscow, and its campaign in favor of the territorial dismemberment of Greater Romania. In 1944, upon Marshall Ion Antonescu's removal from power as a result of a *coup d'état* to which the Romanian Communist Party actively participated, the party returned to political legality. Following its fusion with the Romanian Social Democratic Party, in 1948 it was renamed the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP). In 1965, RWP returned to its pre-1948 denomination, the Romanian Communist Party. In this volume, we employ either the generic term the "party" or the RWP acronym for the period up to 1965, and the Romanian Communist Party or the RCP acronym for the post-1965 period.

4 According to the dictionary, *lumpen* (pl. *lumpen* or *lumpens*) is "of or relating to dispossessed and displaced individuals, especially those who have lost social status," and "a member of the underclass, especially the lowest social stratum." See Dictionary.com (http://dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday/archive/2005/03/23.html). Surely, this metaphor does not cover the experience of the peasantry in its entirety. In fact, despite the decades-long offensive waged by authorities, the peasantry survived the regime as a social class. But numerous peasants were deracinated and forced to emigrate to newly-found socialist towns and cities, where they provided the much-needed labor force for the socialist industrialization. Most of the time, these workers lived in suburban conditions.

5 In the 1960s, collective farms were renamed Agricultural Production Cooperatives (*Cooperative Agricole de Producție*, or CAP). See the Glossary of Terms.

6 With regard to Ana Pauker, see Robert Levy, *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
7 For a comprehensive account of decollectivization, see Katherine Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2003).
8 The papers of these two researchers, along with that of Professor Dumitru Şandru, were included in the original Romanian version of this book. Regrettably, they had to be dropped from the present translation owing to space limitations.
9 For studies on collectivization in Soviet Russia, see selectively: Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); R.W. Davies, *The Socialist Offensive: The Collectivization of Soviet Agriculture, 1929–1930* (London: Macmillan, 1980); Moshe Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: A Study of Collectivization* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village After Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Lynne Viola, *The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
10 For case studies on collectivization in various Eastern European states, see Melissa Bokovoy, *Peasants and Communists: Politics and Ideology in the Yugoslav Countryside, 1941–1953* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1998); Adolf Dobieszewski, *Kolektywizacja wsi polskiej 1948–1956* [Collectivization of Polish Villages 1948–1956] (Warsaw: Fundacja im. Kazimierza Kelles-Krauza, 1993); Mihai Gribincea, *Agricultural Collectivization in Moldavia. Basarabia during Stalinism 1944–1950* (Boulder: East European Monographs, Distributed by Columbia University Press 1996); Marida Hollós, and Béla C. Máday, eds., *New Hungarian Peasants: An East Central European Experience with Collectivization* (New York: Social Science Monographs, 1983).
11 For general overviews of the process of collectivization in Eastern Europe, see Roland A. Francisco, Betty A. Laird, and Roy D. Laird, eds., *Agricultural Policies in the USSR and Eastern Europe* (Boulder: Westview, 1980); Karl-Eugen Wädekin, *Agrarian Policies in Communist Europe: A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Everett Jacobs (The Hague, London: Allanheld Osmun, Martinus Mijhoff, 1982); and Joan Sokolovsky, *Peasants and Power: State Autonomy and the Collectivization of Agriculture in Eastern Europe* (Boulder: Westview, 1990).
12 For the establishment and consolidation of the communist regime in Romania, see Stephen Fischer-Galaţi, *The New Rumania: From People's Democracy to Socialist Republic* (Massachusetts: MIT Press Cambridge, 1969); Ghiţă Ionescu, *Communism in Rumania, 1944–1964* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania, 1944–1965* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971); Dennis Deletant, *Ceauşescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965–1989* (London: Hurst, 1995), 13–56.
13 For early but authoritative articulations of the totalitarian paradigm, see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951); and Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956).

14 For a critique of the "totalitarian model" applied to the analysis of socialist societies, see William E. Crowther, *The Political Economy of Romanian Socialism* (New York, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1988), 1–16.

15 See Henry L. Roberts, *Rumania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1969); David Mitrany, *The Land and the Peasant in Rumania: The War and Agrarian Reform (1917–1921)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930); David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant: A Study in Social Dogmatism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951).

16 See Roberts, "The Change in Economic and Agrarian Policy," 318–331 and 322–329.

17 Edwin Cyril Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History* (New York, Evanston, London; Harper & Row, 1966); Philip Gabriel Eidelberg, *The Great Romanian Peasant Revolt of 1907: Origins of a Modern Jacquerie* (Leiden: Brill, 1974).

18 See Kenneth Jowitt, ed., *Social Change in Romania 1860–1940: A Debate on Development in a European Nation* (Berkeley: University of California, 1978); Daniel Chirot, ed., *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

19 For a comprehensive account of research methodology and the political implications of field research in communist Romania, see David A. Kideckel and Steven L. Sampson, "Fieldwork in Romania: Political, Practical and Ethical Aspects," in John W. Cole, ed., *Anthropological Research in Romania* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1984), 85–102; Steven L. Sampson and David A. Kideckel, "Anthropologists Going into the Cold: Research in the Age of Mutually Assured Destruction," in Paul Turner and David Pitt Hadley, eds., *The Anthropology of War and Peace* (Hadley, Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvery, 1989), 160–173; Katherine Verdery, "Introduction," in *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Katherine Verdery, "How I Became Nationed," in Ronald Grigor Suny and Michael D. Kennedy, eds., *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 341–344. For the evolution of anthropological studies of Eastern European societies, see Joel Martin Halpern and David A. Kideckel, "Anthropology of Eastern Europe," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 12 (1983), 377–402. For the post-1989 convergence of the agendas of "foreign" and "local" Romanian studies, see Constantin Iordachi and Balázs Trencsényi, "In Search of a Usable Past: The Question of National Identity in Romanian Studies, 1990–2000," *East European Politics & Society*, 17 (Summer 2003) 3, 415–454.

20 See Katherine Verdery, "Methods," in *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1991), 19–20.

21 Katherine Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers: Three Centuries of Political, Economic, and Ethnic Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 5.

22 Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers*, 44–45.

23 Gail Kligman, *Căluş: Symbolic Transformation in Romanian Ritual*. Foreword by Mircea Eliade (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Gail Kligman, *The Wedding of the Dead: Ritual, Poetics, and Popular Culture in Transylvania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). See also footnote 52.

24 See David A. Kideckel, "The Dialectic of Rural Development: Cooperative Farm Goals and Family Strategies in a Romanian Commune," *Journal of Rural Cooperation*, 5 (1977) 1, 43–62; David. A. Kideckel, "The Socialist Transformation of Agriculture in a

Romanian Commune, 1945–1962," *American Ethnologist,* 9 (May 1982), 320–340; David A. Kideckel, *Agricultural Cooperativism and Social Process in a Romanian Commune* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Amherst: Anthropology Department, University of Massachusetts, 1979). Kideckel returned to Romania for fieldwork in 1990. In his book on socialist agriculture, he takes a pessimistic view of the state of reform in the early 1990s. See David. A. Kideckel, *The Solitude of Collectivism: Romanian Villagers to the Revolution and Beyond* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1993). For pioneering research on collectivization in Romania, see Kenneth Jowitt, *The Leninist Response to National Dependency* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, Research Series no. 37, 1978); Trond Gilberg, "The Costly Experiment: Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture," in Roland A. Francisco, Betty A. Laird, and Roy D. Laird, eds., *The Political Economy of Collectivized Agriculture* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), 23–62.

25 Costin Murgescu, *Reforma agrară din 1945* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1956).

26 Ion Popescu-Puțuri, Damian Hurezeanu, Gheorghe Matei, Gheorghe Țuțui, and Nichita Paraschiva, eds., *Din lupta PCR pentru închegarea alianței clasei muncitoare cu țărănimea muncitoare, în bătălia pentru reforma agrară din 1944–1945*, 3 vols., (Bucharest, 1955– 1960); O. Feneşan, *Dezvoltarea agriculturii în Republica Populară Română* (Bucharest: Editura Agro-Silvică de Stat, 1958); S. Hartia and M. Dulea, *Constanța, prima regiune colectivizată* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1960); Nicolae Giosan, ed. *Agricultura României, 1944–1964* (Bucharest, 1965); M. Biji, ed., *Dezvoltarea economică a României, 1944–1964* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1965); *Alianța clasei muncitoare cu țărănimea muncitoare în România* (Bucharest, 1969).

27 Mihail Cernea, *Sociologia Cooperativei Agricole* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1974).

28 Pavel Câmpeanu, *The Genesis of the Stalinist Social Order* (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1988). See also his works under the Felipe Garcia Casals pseudonym, *The Syncretic Society* (White Plains, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1980); *The Origins of Stalinism* (White Plains, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1986); *Exit: Towards Post-Stalinism* (White Plains, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1990).

29 For a first general overview, see Dennis Deletant, *România sub regimul communist* (Bucharest: Fundația Academia Civică, 1997). See also Deletant's chapter on communism in Mihai Bărbulescu, Dennis Deletant, Keith Hitchins, Şerban Papacostea, Pompiliu Teodor, *Istoria Românilor* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1998). For the most recent and comprehensive work on communism in Romania, see Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). See also Gail Kligman. *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

30 In a groundbreaking work, Vladimir Tismăneanu explored the dark sides of the Stalinist political biography of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. Tismăneanu sees Gheorghiu-Dej's rule not as a period of strengthening of national identity, but as planned terror and fierce political repression. See Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Fantoma lui Gheorghiu-Dej* (Bucharest: Editura Univers, 1995).

31 See Stelian Tănase, *Elite şi societate. Guvernarea Gheorghiu-Dej, 1948–1965* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998), 71–80 and 163–166.

32 Dennis Deletant, *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State, 1948–1965* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). For an analysis of post-1965 repression,

see Deletant, *Ceauşescu and the Securitate*. For the history of the repressive apparatus in Romania, see also the collection of documents with comments by Marius Oprea, ed. *Banalitatea răului. O istorie a Securității în documente. 1949–1989* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2002).

33 Deletant, *Communist Terror in Romania*, 136–141, 142–145.

34 Bogdan Tănăsescu, *Colectivizarea, între propagandă şi realitate* (Bucharest: Globus, 1994).

35 Dumitru Şandru, *Reforma agrară din 1921 în România* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1975); Dumitru Şandru, *Populația rurală a României între cele două războaie mondiale* (Iaşi: Editura Academiei Române, 1980); and *Creditul agricol în România, 1918–1944* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1985).

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38 Marian Cojoc, *Dobrogea, de la reforma agrară la colectivizarea forțată* (Constanța: Muntenia şi Leda, 2001).

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41 Levy, *Ana Pauker*, See also note 6.

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43 Anca Damian, Florin Breazu, and Ion Bălan, eds., *Colectivizarea în Vlaşca, 1949–1950. Documente* (Bucharest: Vinea, 2002); Andrea Dobeş, Gheorghe Mihai Bârlea, and Robert Fürtos, eds., *Colectivizarea în Maramureş. Contribuții documentare (1949–1962),* vol. 1 (Bucharest: Fundația Academia Civică, 2004).

44 See the list of references at the end of this volume.

45 Smaranda Vultur, ed., *Istorie trăită, istorie povestită. Deportarea în Bărăgan (1951–1956)* (Timişoara: Amarcord, 1997).

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50 For an example, see Andrew Cartwright, "Reconstructing the Past in the Village: Land Reforms in Transylvania 1990–1991," in George Cipăianu and Virgiliu Ţârău, eds., *Romanian and British Historians on the Contemporary History of Romania* (Cluj-Napoca: University Press, 2000), 167–183.
51 Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare*. See also note 5.
52 Before Gail Kligman conducted her research in Ieud, Maramureş, in 1978–1979, the *Securitate* warned the peasants against talking to her about the problematic history of the village in the 1950s and 1960s. See also note 23.
53 See for instance Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, and Steven Lukes, eds., *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: Norton, 1965); Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Annette Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
54 Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, "Transforming Property, Persons, and State: Collectivization in Romania, 1949–1962." Research proposal to the National Science Foundation, 1999.
55 See J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). For a classical sociological perspective, see Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secrets Thereof," in *Capital*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1887).
56 For the privatization of public space see Michael F. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Rosemary Coombe, *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Lawrence Lessig, *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World* (New York: Random House, 2001); Katherine Verdery and Caroline Humphrey, eds., *Property in Question: Value Transformation in the Global Economy* (Oxford: Berg Press, 2004).
57 Kligman and Verdery. "Transforming Property, Persons, and State."
58 A logical term for this process would be *dechiaburization* (dekulakization), but this term is already consecrated as meaning the liquidation of kulaks (through executions, deportations, destruction of their social relations, and property confiscation). Iordachi and Chelcea use the term in this sense. Therefore, in this volume we use various other expressions for the process of removing *chiaburi* from the lists: de-listing, declassification or reclassification of *chiaburi*, etc. (see the studies by Verdery, Vultur, Stan and Stewart, and Oláh).

The First Wave of the Collectivization Campaign: Central Policies and Their Regional Implementation (1949–1953)

ROBERT LEVY

The first wave of collectivization in Romania took place from 1949 to 1953, and was characterized by conflicting policy lines emanating from Bucharest, which produced both aggressive advances and dramatic retreats throughout the campaign. This paper will outline what appear to be the five discernible stages of this period. Emphasis is placed on the earlier stages due to the greater availability of documents concerning this time (as opposed to the latter stages, especially the fifth).

1. STAGE 1: MARCH 1949–FEBRUARY 1950

Collectivization was formally launched at a Central Committee plenary of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP) on March 3–5, 1949. The Party's initial line on the campaign was communicated in the Politburo's report to the plenary: it emphasized that the Party was not proceeding with massive collectivization, but would first concentrate on developing trading cooperatives and allow the development of simple tillage associations (*întovărăşiri*) as a preliminary step for those unwilling to enter collective farms. At the same time, it would establish only a limited number of collectives (similar to the Soviet *kolhoz*) as models with which the Party could explain the benefits of collectivized farming. The plenary drafted a model charter of the collective farm, specifying that its creation must be based on the principle that "the peasants are to enter the collective farms out of their own free will." It also stipulated that each member must possess 3 ha of land, on the assumption that the collectives would require at least that amount if they were to benefit from mechanization and become viable. It granted the collectives tax-exempt status and a 20 percent reduction of obligatory collection quotas for the first two years of their existence. It also set up an Agrarian Commission, whose sole task was to organize and oversee the collectivization campaign.[1]

Led by Ana Pauker, the Agrarian Commission was made up of Agriculture Minister Vasile Vaida, Dumitru Petrescu, Pavel Chirtoacă, Nicolae Ceauşescu, Mircea Gogioiu, and the Soviet advisor Veretnikov. The commission dispatched teams, each made up of two Central Committee representatives and delegates from the county Party committees, out in the field to investigate the conditions in

villages that had submitted requests to form collective farms, as well as to locations recommended as being propitious by the county committees. Upon analyzing their reports, the commission found only 48 proposals to be acceptable; out of these, only 21 had met the conditions deemed necessary for establishing collectives, and the rest had only partially met them. The majority of those submitting requests were poor peasants with fewer than 3 ha of farmland (most had only 2 ha). "In addition," Pauker noted, "the number of cattle and tools is generally insufficient. Indicative of this is the fact that there are oxen-pulled plows in many places, which is evidence of profound poverty… Generally the peasants don't have to beg for a living, and they didn't condition their joining the collective on getting land from the state. But they did suggest that there are plots of land close by that are not being used by their owners. A huge problem was that of the debts that they have, especially the ones for cattle and to the state." After the famine of 1946–47, the government issued 8 million lei in loans, with considerable interest, for purchasing cows. (The government extended these loans for 2–3 years when only half were paid back.) "[The peasants] then bought cattle in Transylvania, of which a large number died. On top of that, the price of cattle has gone down so much that, if today they decided to sell their cattle in order to pay off their debts, they wouldn't get enough to do so." On the other hand, a significant number of middle peasants also submitted requests to join collectives, in part to pay less taxes, and in part (as occurred in Sibiu) to acquire abandoned houses of ethnic Germans.[2]

The 48 collectives chosen by the commission were to comprise between 35 and 420 people, depending on the location.[3] "It was decided," Pauker informed the Secretariat, "on the size of 100–200 hectares [for each collective]—first, so that the members of the *kolhoz* would know what's going on in their *kolhoz*; second, to observe the principle of their joining voluntarily; and third, because we realized that initially we won't have cadres who are capable of running a large farm." In addition, "these types of farms were proposed following the experience of the Soviet Union, because these are the simplest forms, while collective farms with vineyards and livestock are more difficult to pull off."[4]

The commission added several stipulations not yet clarified in the model charter: members were allowed their own plots by their homes ranging between 1/4 and 1/2 a hectare; they could keep only one cow for personal use, and the rest were to be taken over by the collective (though this point was soon qualified when problems arose); every *kolhoznic* had to work a minimum of 100 work days; and landless peasants could be accepted into a collective, if its members so desired.[5] It also strengthened the principle that "the peasants are to enter the collective farms out of their own free will" with the more restrictive phrasing: "the peasants are to enter on their own initiative."[6]

The Commission resolved to establish 5–6 collectives at a time over the summer months,[7] and in the end created 56 collectives in 1949.[8] The leadership was well aware of these first collectives' precarious standing, which was only confirmed by field reports that summer. Some examples:

CERNATUL DE JOS (Trei Scaune county) – In Cernatul de Jos, at first there were 42 people joining up, now there are 34 with 57 hectares… and 4 teachers who donated 16 hectares… About 215 people have to be moved to consolidate the collective— people we had given land to, and who are on our side… This way we'll get 71 hectares… It's been really difficult here because there are a large number of *chiaburi* [kulaks] who are working together with the priests. We had a lot of problems because of one big *chiabur*, who has 49 hectares… This guy had been a prisoner in the USSR, and he's working against us. He told people at the local tavern that we want to establish a *kolhoz* not in our own hometowns, but in theirs. He wants a passport to go to America. That night we gave him the freedom he wanted; we arrested him… Up till then the fight against us was out in the open. After his arrest they stopped fighting us openly. The people are asking why didn't we divide up and give that big landowner's land to them. They expect the state to give them land again… The *chiaburi* are spreading the kind of rumors that assure that, whatever we get done by day, they demolish by night. The women are telling their husbands that they'll kill them, or they'll divorce them, if they enter the collective farm.

BALȚAȚI (Iaşi county) – There are 54 registered out of 244 people. They have 12 plows, 16 horse carriages, etc. The amount of land is 132 hectares. It was suggested to add the land of the absentees (which they specified to be 25.98 hectares), as well as the 5 hectares belonging to the church, and the 5 hectares belonging to the school. It's going to be really difficult to consolidate the collective. [Those joining the collective] have land that is far away… We noticed that those who signed up had a tendency to isolate themselves from the other people in the village… In Bălțați we had a lot of problems with the women. Some 10 of them came and also threatened divorce. The widows wanted to join, but nevertheless the great majority of them didn't, for they said: "We want to join, but are they then going to still give us our pensions? Because without the pensions, we don't want to stay…" The head priest from Războieni sent a teacher to Bălțați to start a choir there. He got the children who were not in the collective farm to start stirring up trouble against the collective. They said that the collective farm won't succeed because the people there are poor… Another problem is the land around the houses. They insisted that we let them keep a half a hectare.

SÂNTANA (Arad county) – There are 32 signed up, out of whom 9 are Party members… Most [of the questions at the instruction meeting] were confined to the problem of what's going to happen with the debts. The answer given to them was that the Central Committee will address the problem of those who had incurred debts for the production tools that are being collectivized. But those who have debts for other things have to pay. This made them very unhappy. They had borrowed between 13,000 and 108,000 lei in order to buy production tools, but the great majority of them used the money for other things. Some of them are among those who have signed up, thinking that they would get rid of their debts… At Sân-

tana there's another problem: the secretary of the neighborhood Party committee, at a plenary meeting, threw out an ethnic Hungarian citizen who was trying to join the collective farm. When asked why, he said that a Hungarian has no place being there… This is a chauvinistic tendency that is all the more noteworthy, in that this secretary himself is a Hungarian. There was a fight between the Germans and the Romanians with stones and bats. The political work we're doing of promoting the fraternity of cohabitating nationalities isn't particularly attracting anyone.

BUDUSLĂU (Arad county) – 37 peasants joined here, all of them Party members, with 42 hectares, 14 oxen, 2 horses, 7 plows, etc. The majority of the women were not convinced. Some of the peasants stayed out and were afraid to join because the women were threatening to divorce them. We explained to them that the first thing they have to do is convince their wives… There's going to be a lot of problems consolidating the collective at Buduslău, because all we've got is 18 hectares over a wide area, and the rest of the plots are found in other places. 8 poor peasants, 58 middle peasants, and 18 *chiaburi* will have to be moved out… The Party organization took upon itself to convince the poor and middle peasants, whose plots fall within the collective's consolidated boundaries, that they, too, should join the collective farm.

SĂVENI (Dorohoi county) – There are 45 people signed up… Among them there were some 8 office workers, 2 militia men, and others working at the M.T.S. [Machine and Tractor Station] and the State Farm. We explained to them the purpose of a collective farm. They still wanted to join up, saying that their wives would work at the collective farm. Nevertheless we removed eight, four withdrew, and 17 more people signed up, so that at this point we have 49 registered—and they're still registering. The inventory they have is very little: 2 horses, 1 ox, 9 plows, etc. Their land is arable and suitable; they have roughly 2.60 hectares each.

DRĂGUŞENI (Dorohoi county) – Here there's a woman who's mayor, a Party member, very weak. The mentality of the peasants is that a woman can't possibly lead them. At Drăguşeni… the M.T.S. looked terrible, and this fact was used against us. One comrade from the county Party office told them: "Whether you want to or not, you'll still join!" During the time we were there, the peasants went to town to sell their cattle, out of fear of the collective farm. They're saying: "It's better to sell the cattle; we can buy good clothes, and then they can make us join!"

RADOMIR (Romanați county) – 51 working peasants signed up… After the statute was explained to them, unrest broke out among the villagers. On our part, we made a mistake not to closely examine the wives of those who were signing up. Thus, the wife of a certain peasant, Petre Pârvu, when she heard that her husband had joined the collective farm, wouldn't let him back in the house. We summoned her to talk to us. She's a very difficult woman to convince, and in the end we were unable to convince her. One comrade, the person responsible for organizing at the

Party's district office, also said that his wife doesn't want to join the collective. Generally, working with the women was very difficult. But some people tried to use this as an excuse for not joining the collective farm.

ROMA (Botoşani county) – 42 signed up there, out of whom 10 withdrew… Among those who registered we have 24 Party members, out of whom 15 party members were firmly decided… An instructor was sent from the cooperative, and he gathered all those affiliated with the cooperative, some 1,800 people. Part of the group who joined the collective farm was in the leadership of the cooperative. When the comrade from the cooperative started to instruct the others that the *chiaburi* should have nothing to do with the cooperative, the *chiaburi* began to scream: "It's not a cooperative you're establishing, but a collective farm." One comrade over there, who had been a worker in Czechoslovakia, who had also joined the collective farm, told them: "Be nice. You will see who wants to join and who doesn't." One *chiabur*, Ciocan, jumped on him and started to beat him up. The other comrades fled from the cooperative; others broke down the door and a big fight started, with 9 people seriously beaten up… The secretary of the UTM [Union of Young Workers], the president of the Ploughman's Front, and the presidents of the UFDR were beaten up… Of those beaten up, 2 are still in the hospital. They said that only the *chiaburi* started the fight, and that the *chiaburi* are not only against the collective farm, but are against the regime and against the cooperative… The people are saying that the cooperative isn't distributing goods the way it should… Now they say that those from the cooperative were fighting each other. The most combative were the women, who were screaming at those who were beaten up, to see if they were still moving… On another occasion a Party member beat up his wife, because he wanted to join the collective and she didn't. We talked to him and explained to him that he has to convince her. The women were against joining, and those who let their husbands sign up did so only because they are used to obeying them.

RĂŞCANI (Vaslui county) – We had 30 who joined, out of 37 people living in the village. After we left, 35 were signed up—in other words, everyone except the 2 *chiaburi* of the village… They are bringing to the collective 67 hectares of land, 10 plows, 5 harrows, 6 carriages, 7 oxen, and 44 potential workers age 14 and up. Since they are averaging less than 2 hectares each, they actually need an additional 85 hectares of land, which can be taken from the state reserves, as well as exchanging with the *chiaburi*, the absentees, and those working in the State Farm, who will be moved 15 kilometers from the village… The two *chiaburi* went on the attack, with lies, rumors, and threats—that they are going to take power, that the Americans are coming and they will shoot all those who sign up, and that the kolhoz is going to take everything from them, and that they're never going to see their children again, etc. At the beginning, the peasants were discouraged, but nobody withdrew… The Securitate arrested the daughter of the *chiabur* Ciobănica, who had threatened a poor woman.[9]

The pattern was that of collectives comprising the most indigent elements lacking practically everything. Hence, at this stage the campaign's watchword was clearly *caution.* Inaugurations of new collectives were, more often than not, postponed or cancelled if conditions were deemed inadequate.[10] There was only one reported instance of coercion in 1949: the village of Pădureni (Putna county).[11] In response, the central authorities resolved that "the Secretary of the Provisional Committee who proceeded in this manner will be replaced, and eventually the militia officer and the railway station manager as well… Here work has to be started from the beginning."[12] They also opted for firmer control from the center: on October 3, Nicolae Ceauşescu noted that "it was decided that in general no changes are to be made, and no people are to be unmasked, without approval."[13]

The Agrarian Commission was also prudent on the all-too delicate question of consolidating the collective farms, which required expropriating individual private farms falling within the collective's boundaries. The inhibitions of the central authorities around this issue were evident at a Secretariat meeting in August 1949:

> DUMITRU PETRESCU: We don't have favorable conditions for consolidations. Right now it's a difficult problem, and we have to seriously think about it and discuss it on principle. We have to find a way to achieve our goals. We should take only half a county at the beginning, and we should think about selecting a place where conditions will be advantageous. We have to proceed cautiously in that county…
> NICOLAE CEAUŞESCU: The people are saying, why should we get rid of any property lines if the land is now being swapped? We raised the issue that we shouldn't start with all the counties and all the farms right now, but rather we should start first with several counties in a few parts of the country, to see what the atmosphere is and how things will unfold. We're going to have difficulties. It's not going to be easy… We thought about doing it in Ialomița, where the land is easy to consolidate. It's well-off, but there are few villages, and we won't have to establish a collective in the middle of a village. It might also be possible to do so in Constanța, Teleorman, Timiş, Olt, Vlaşca, Fălciu, and Brăila… ten counties in all. For now let's start with one; and if things go well, we'll start in all of them.
> ANA PAUKER: We should keep the collections in mind, that we don't interrupt them. But, even so, we shouldn't take on 10 counties. If the difficulties are too great, we should allow ourselves the option of stopping, so that we don't suffer a defeat. It'll be easier to mobilize the Party and state apparatus where the collections have been completed. We should make it more difficult for the *chiaburi*; let's do it so that the peasantry, and the middle peasants, will support us. And for now let's start with only 5 counties. Let's take it very slowly and very carefully, step by step, with lots of tact, so we don't find ourselves with too much unrest and be forced to back off. From the point of view of not only the state farms but also the collectives,

> there is a big advantage to have the land more consolidated. I would like to proceed with a thermometer in our hands. But we can't put things off too long, either.[14]

One week later, Pauker further cautioned the Agrarian Commission members that "consolidating [the collectives] is only possible when the people renounce their land of their own free will in exchange for the land of those entering the collective."[15] This line was firmly communicated to the county Party committees. For instance, a local Party official reported that in one village "the people's opinion was that it's going to be rather difficult to consolidate, because the middle peasants and even the poor peasants are not going to give up their old plots of land… Most of [those who need to be removed] are middle peasants, and only two are *chiaburi*. We told them that we are going to give them land that is closer and of better quality. But they were poor peasants, one of whom, for example, has only 50 yards of land, and even he doesn't want to enter the collective farm." To this Pauker's responded: "Couldn't you have avoided taking those plots of land? The instructions from Bucharest were to avoid such situations as much as possible."[16]

Further, at meetings with regional and county Party officials, the issue of the *chiaburi*—how to define them and whether or not to accept them into the collectives—frequently arose. "In general," Interior Commerce Minister Vasile Malinschi acknowledged at one such meeting, "restricting the *chiaburi* is the most delicate problem we face."[17] This was because Party leaders could not agree on precise criteria for defining a *chiabur*. The March 1949 plenary had defined them simply as those who were exploiting the labor of others,[18] which soon proved problematic.[19] But there was no consensus on how to revise the definition—namely, on whether to base the definition strictly on the amount of land one owned (supported by Pauker and, until 1951, Vasile Luca)[20] or to also take into account the peasants' income (supported by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej).[21] It was only after September 1951, when a special Soviet commission to oversee a second currency reform arrived in the country, that "a collective of three comrades was formed" to establish the criteria, which they presented to the Romanian Party leadership on April 21, 1952.[22]

Consequently, until April 1952, the answers the center could give to inquiries from the periphery as to what defined *chiaburi* were vague and muddled. But it instructed the local committees that, however they defined them, they should accept the *chiabur*'s requests for membership in the collectives.[23] Although *chiaburi* were formally prohibited from joining the collectives, the Commission left the door open by adding a proviso that those who were working themselves, and no longer exploiting others, could enter.[24]

Over the winter months (1949–1950), the Agrarian Commission continued its cautionary approach on forming new collectives: "From the fall [of 1949] to the spring [of 1950], a plan did not exist for creating [the collectives]. Instead, requests came in spontaneously" from the countryside—reflecting the policy "that collec-

tives are to be created on the peasants' initiative."[25] The apparent line then coming out of Bucharest was that collectivization depended on the peasants' wishes, which in turn depended on the Party's ability to increase mechanization through industrialization. "We are the only Popular Democratic country that is still rationing bread," Pauker reminded the Politburo in October 1949. "We have difficulties supplying bread, meat, vegetables, and cotton… We are lacking in productivity, which is extremely low in this country. Here, too, we are last among the Popular Democratic countries. The most important problem we face is raising productivity. We will be able to do this precisely with the collective farms and the tillage associations, where we'll get rid of land boundaries, which is not an easy thing to do if the people make up their minds that it's a step toward collective farms. And the peasants won't give up their separate plots until we have tractors."[26] (This last point seems to have contradicted remarks made the day before by the Agrarian Section's Soviet advisor Veretnikov that "[t]ractors should be provided only to the extent that the collective farm can't function otherwise.")[27] Pauker was even more blunt when objecting to projections of new collectives set in the first Five-Year Plan (1951–1955): "Things are backward in this proposal. Can you really say 'the gradual transformation [to socialism] of the small [peasant] producers' before developing industry? It's on the basis of socialist industrialization that one can proceed with the replacement of the *chiaburi* and with collectivization… But here we have it backwards. It's not right politically to put it like that. Rather, you have to first raise the problem of industry… and then say here that 'This will make proceeding to the socialist transformation of agriculture possible.'"[28] This openly contradicted the Stalinist line, which suggested just the opposite, that collectivization was the means for acquiring as large an agricultural surplus as possible to finance industrialization.[29]

2. STAGE 2: FEBRUARY 1950–JUNE 15, 1950

No fewer than a thousand requests to form new collectives were sent to Bucharest by early October 1949, and an additional 350 came in by February 1950.[30] Of these, the Commission approved only 120, which were set up in February and March (bringing the total number of collective farms to 176).[31] A Party report noted that inaugurations of collectives in a number of counties on February 26–28 and March 1–2 went smoothly; not so, however, with the consolidations, which provoked "numerous instances of unrest… in different regions of the country, particularly in the Dolj region." Specifically, it reported that in many villages "the peasants refuse to recognize the consolidations… and began plowing their old plots of land." The peasantry also manifested "[d]issatisfaction because they were not given other plots in exchange for land confiscated in the consolidations." Consequently, "the peasants did not allow work to be done within the perimeter of the collective farm." Added to this were "shortages of cowfeed," "shortages of grain," "shortages of seeds," "dissatisfaction regarding the building of pens in the

collective," "dissatisfaction regarding milk quotas, which [the peasants] consider to be too high," and "the problem of pasture land for cows." The last issue "led to unrest in the village of Horleşti in the Iaşi region, where on March 20 [1950] approximately 500 villagers armed with hoes and pitchforks prevented the village's agricultural officer and a tractor driver from plowing commonly owned village land and beat them up, after which they went to the community council building and severely beat the council secretary."[32]

But despite such problems, and despite the apparent resolve to handle those problems as gingerly as possible, the Party leaders made several moves that signaled an intensification of the campaign. At its fifth plenary on January 23–25, 1950, the RWP Central Committee replaced the Agrarian Commission with an Agrarian Section of the Central Committee (also led by Ana Pauker) and entrusted it with expanded responsibilities.[33] At the same time, it rescinded the revised clause to the model charter on peasant initiative.[34] The new line was pointedly communicated to the regional Party leaders several weeks later: "[T]he socialist transformation of agriculture does not happen by itself, for that task falls to the Party and the proletariat. The initiative to move towards socialism does not belong to the peasants." The county committees were criticized for not working hard enough to create new collective farms or to attract middle peasants into those farms. It was not acceptable, they were told, that the inadequate number of collectives they had proposed to establish in February or March were to comprise only 1.2–3 percent of middle peasants, or that over half the Party members in many villages and rural districts were refusing to enter those collectives.[35]

But when the locals went on to propose the creation of some 900 new collectives during April and May, the Agrarian Section rejected the proposals because they were too inflated.[36] (The Section ended up establishing by June 15th no more than 168 of the initial 900 proposed— the latter figure having been dismissed by Pauker as "madness.")[37] And although, at the meeting with the county Party secretaries, Gheorghiu-Dej had categorically called for linking collectivization with "an open battle" against the *chiaburi*,[38] the Agrarian Section continued to endorse what was later castigated as "class collaboration" with the *chiaburi*: the allowing of "self-dechiaburization" through *chiaburi* land donations to collective farms, which enabled many *chiaburi* officially to re-qualify as middle peasants.[39] Here were apparent signs that the Agrarian Section was determined to maintain the prudent approach of the year before. But by the beginning of June it was clear that such foot-dragging was futile in the face of the pressure of the Soviet "advisors," who threw their weight behind (if not imposed) a plan to set up no fewer than 1,000 collectives that summer.[40] On June 6th, Gheorghiu-Dej announced that the party leadership had in fact approved the plan with a Central Committee resolution entitled "In View of Intensifying the Work of Establishing Collective Farms," though the actual number of new collectives was purposely omitted.[41] What remained in dispute, however, was the Agrarian Section's continued control of the process: Pauker and Luca insisted on maintaining the status quo, while Gheorghiu-Dej favored handing control over to the

local authorities.[42] This final issue was resolved immediately after Pauker left on vacation on June 15th, a respite extended for the entire summer when she was diagnosed with breast cancer soon afterwards.[43]

3. STAGE 3: JUNE 15, 1950–SEPTEMBER 1950

Alexandru Moghioroş took Pauker's place as head of the Agrarian Section during her absence.[44] On June 15th, he met with the county party secretaries in Bucharest to discuss the Central Committee resolution. "The C.C. Resolution," Moghioroş told them

> that it is essential to create collective farms only on the basis of persuasion, with the free consent of the poor peasantry… Here anything that can be classified as force must be excluded… But it's clear that we can't proceed with the line of spontaneity… The business of organizing collective farms on a voluntarily basis on the peasantry's part does not mean that we simply wait for our peasantry… to come and request the establishment of collective farms… We are not at all indifferent as to how many collectives we will have this year…
>
> Even though it is clear that we should not be at all worried that we might be proceeding with massive collectivization, we should nevertheless be aware that we are preparing our first Five-Year Plan; by the end of the first five years, we have to have [the proportion of land] in the area of 50 percent collective farms. It is a necessity to reach approximately this proportion, and this means [establishing] 1,000 collective farms [by September]…
>
> I think, comrades, that it should be clear to us by now that the number of collectives that you proposed is insufficient, and that you yourselves must come to the conclusion that it's imperative to revise your plan, and to do so immediately.[45]

The unambiguous message was that the locals were expected to adhere to a fixed quota of new collectives; and, it was soon announced, they would have complete control in the creation of those collectives within their areas. Approval of new collectives was no longer the prerogative of the Agrarian Section in Bucharest, which, asserted Moghioroş, had promoted a pace that was "too slow."[46] The Section was now reduced to supervising the process in the field, but its instructors soon found themselves in an impossible situation, and were unable to exercise effective control.[47] Often avoided by the local authorities, who were determined to meet the plan at any price,[48] each instructor had either two or three regions to supervise and could only count on the help of a few other instructors in any given county.[49] To alleviate the problem, the party chose 28 delegates from the former verification subcommittees, the army and various party organizations at the Agrarian Section's disposal to be supervisors on the ground. Most of these

delegates proved incapable of carrying out their work.[50] It also sent 25,000 workers to the countryside to aid in the campaign,[51] which undoubtedly only added to the chaos.

Consequently, Party officials—with the active assistance of the Securitate and the Militia—began employing massive coercion for the first time in the creation and consolidation of collective farms throughout the country.[52] The extent of the repression was enormous: no fewer than 30,000 peasant families were forcibly registered in new collectives during the summer and fall of 1950,[53] and untold others were pushed off their land while the collectives were consolidated.[54] The repression was only exacerbated by the actions of the Party leadership in July 1950. First, it decreed that new collectives must comprise no fewer than 35 families. This in itself was a source of coercion, as county committees reverted to massive pressure tactics to meet that number, signing up hordes of salaried workers and functionaries who were unavailable to work the fields. Second, it stipulated that each family in a collective must have an equal amount of arable land. This increased pressure on middle peasants to enter the collectives, and led to the confiscation of *chiaburi* land through the process of "dechiaburization."[55]

Third, the leadership resolved that *chiabur* land donations (or "renouncements") would no longer be tolerated. Instead, the Party committees could take all the *chiaburi* land or none at all, and only by confiscation. The central authorities announced that they were permitted to confiscate the land of "one or two of the most hostile *chiaburi*" in every village. However, these parameters were not well-defined, and in some counties confiscations quickly commenced of the properties of more than ten *chiaburi* per village, along with those of many middle peasants.[56] The belief that "we're creating [collective] farms at the expense of the *chiaburi*" was widespread and became a slogan of the period; indeed, local Party officials generally considered *chiaburi* property to be the product of their exploitation of the poorer peasants, who would have nothing if they didn't take back what they could from the *chiaburi*.[57] When the central authorities learned of these large-scale confiscations, which clearly exceeded their previously set parameters, they did nothing to halt them. Rather, they instructed the locals "not to carry out any more confiscations of the type that takes the land but allows the *chiabur* to remain in the village. If his land is confiscated, he must also be expelled from the village." A Party commission decreed that confiscations should be carried out only through arrests and trials. Round-ups and prosecutions commenced in every county of the country, and judges were pressured to speed up convictions on fabricated or frivolous charges. In some cases, the sentences were predetermined.[58]

The repression triggered an immediate backlash. By early July "a genuine revolt in the villages" broke out throughout Romania, with "an organized form" of resistance erupting "[p]ractically everywhere."[59] The center's response was more repression: it dispatched the militia, Securitate and army to trouble spots to restore order; but often they were attacked and disarmed by the rebelling peasants.[60] At no point during the summer did the regime reconsider its collectiviza-

tion policy or take any action against those coercing peasants. Nor did it sanction any guilty officials throughout the remainder of the year; on the contrary, all of them "were promoted to better and more important jobs."[61]

4. STAGE 4: OCTOBER 1950–JANUARY 1952

In early September 1950, at the behest of the Agrarian Section, and perhaps in response to the daily arrival of "tens and tens of letters complaining of abuses from citizens across the country," the Central Committee formed four special commissions to investigate the forced collectivization of the countryside. Made up of Central Committee, Interior and Justice Ministry officials, the commissions stayed out on the field for a full month. After this time, they submitted reports to Ana Pauker, who had resumed heading the Agrarian Section in October.[62] That winter, "[u]nder the pretext of strengthening the existing collectives, as well as the international situation that demands 'quiet' in the countryside, Ana Pauker gave orders to slow down the pace of establishing new collective farms."[63] Reflecting this, the Party leadership first scaled back by one-third the projections of new collectives in the first Five Year Plan, which had originally stipulated that no less than 62 percent of all arable land in the country was to be comprised of collective farms (and an additional 8 percent by State Farms) by 1955,[64] and then decided against setting any precise figure of projected collectivized land by the end of the five year period.[65]

The immediate priority, it was now emphasized, was to solidify the collectives that had just been established.[66] Doing so, however, would take a miracle, given the miserable state of these collectives: of the 971 created in 1950, no fewer than 250 were considered "weak collectives"[67]—an understatement if there ever was one, as the bulk of them were barely functioning. Many were made up of large numbers of salaried workers who had been forced to join and were now unavailable to work the fields.[68] This was true, for example, of 14 of the 38 members of the collective in the village of Bistreți (Dolj region). The remaining members had signed up after having been promised jobs as functionaries (of these, only eight were actually given jobs).[69] Apparently it was generally assumed that the family members of salaried functionaries would work the fields, yet the families of 99 percent of salaried functionaries who joined collective farms failed to show up for work.[70] Indeed, this was generally the case with *any* peasant who had been forcibly registered: only 50–60 members of the "Filimon Sârbu" collective in the village of Şona (Fărăgaş county), 30–60 of 272 members of the "21 December" collective in the village of Dumitra (Năsăud county), 5 or 6 members of the collective in the village of Jupa (Caransebeş county), 10 percent of the members of the collective in the village of Crăgueşti (Severin county) and not a single member of the collective in the village of Odverem (Cluj county) regularly showed up for work.[71] Large numbers of peasants, moreover, simply ignored the existence of the new collectives and continued to work their old plots.[72]

The Agrarian Section's solution was, in effect, to turn back the clock and expunge the abuses. It decreed that all those wishing to leave a collective farm would be allowed to do so and would receive parcels detached from the collective's land pool; all trials of collective farm members charged with not bringing their land and possessions to the collectives were to be immediately halted, and all previous convictions annulled; all peasants whose farms had fallen within the perimeters of new collectives and who had received in return either poor-quality land, far-away land, or no land at all, were to be compensated with land; all *chiaburi* who had been illegally arrested were to be immediately released from prison; and all collective farms that had taken over land confiscated from the *chiaburi* were to return that land to their previous owners.[73] Having been criticized by the Party leadership for its arrests of *chiaburi*, the Interior Ministry leadership ordered that from now on "those who are meeting their obligations to the state and who are not manifesting hostility towards the regime should be left in peace."[74]

In addition, the center informed local Party leaders that it was reverting to its previous policy requiring all future proposals for new collectives, and all plans for consolidating those collectives, to be approved by the Agrarian Section in Bucharest.[75] It also passed legislation (drafted in the Agrarian Section's Circular no. 13) mandating that the Party must stop selecting only the best and most accessible land when consolidating new collectives; repealing the requirement that a collective be comprised of a single body of land, thereby reducing land confiscations; and stipulating penalties up to Party expulsion and criminal trial for anyone forcing peasants into collective farms.[76] The Circular effectively inhibited local officials from taking aggressive measures or showing any personal initiative in advancing collectivization: no more than 30 proposals for new collectives, for instance, were submitted by the periphery between January 1 and March 1, 1951.[77] In any case, at this stage Bucharest's consistent reception of such proposals was to reject or shelve them.[78] As a result, only 62 new collectives were officially established in 1951, all of which had actually been set up and consolidated during the summer and fall of 1950, but were not yet formally inaugurated.[79]

5. STAGE 5: JANUARY 1952–APRIL 1953

In the midst of this retreat during stage 4, Gheorghiu-Dej pushed a proposal to create a third, intermediate type of farm that fell in between the tillage associations (*întovărăşiri*) and the kolhoz-type collective farms.[80] The original associations (dubbed "MTS-associations" because they were created and overseen by the state's Machine and Tractor Stations) allowed peasants to work the land cooperatively but continue to own private plots, tools, and livestock. Since they were not required to sign any statute, the peasants usually set up associations on a temporary basis in order to jointly rent MTS tractors during the plowing season.[81] Now Gheorghiu-Dej—with Stalin's backing[82]—proposed creating Soviet TOZ-type associations (see the Glossary of Terms) that would be permanent cooperatives,

with the goal of their eventually becoming full-fledged kolhozes.[83] The TOZ began to be established in the early spring of 1952, with no fewer than 900 TOZs set up in April alone.[84]

At the same time, the creation of new collectives resumed in early 1952. This, too, was probably the result of Soviet intervention. A special Soviet commission, which had arrived in September 1951 to help prepare a second Currency Reform (carried out in January 1952),[85] promptly intervened with the Party leaders regarding the consolidation of the State Farms[86] (which the Agrarian Section had also delayed due to peasant resistance[87]) and the commencement of an iron-fisted collections drive.[88] Besieged by state collectors, large numbers of peasants requested to set up collectives to obtain reductions in the collection quotas granted to collective farmers.[89] No fewer than 320 collective farms were inaugurated by the end of May 1952,[90] when the Pauker faction was purged from the leadership.

With the "Right Deviationists" (accused of dragging their feet on collectivization) removed from the scene, there was nothing standing in the way of a return to the coercion of 1950. On July 3rd, Gheorghiu-Dej announced the resumption of the open fight against the *chiaburi* (100,000 of whom were "discovered" in the ranks of the middle peasantry), sparking mass arrests and trials across the country.[91] In September, Gheorghiu-Dej returned the authority of establishing new collectives and TOZs to the local Party committees.[92] Over the next two months, the terror of two years before was repeated throughout Romania—triggering yet another peasant rebellion.[93] But, as in the summer and fall of 1950, the center's response to Party officials' coercion was decidedly muted. Speaking of the repression that was simultaneously going on during that summer's collection drive, Moghioroş announced that henceforth local authorities themselves would decide whether or not to prosecute their colleagues for abusing peasants. "We shouldn't go in the direction of arresting a number of honest Party activists, who either were goaded by others, or for one reason or another committed a number of deviations. They shouldn't be arrested for any deviation… Arrests should be a last resort, and only against those who are working with the enemy or are under his influence." It's doubtful that Moghioroş was restricting these remarks to state collectors alone, especially given the fact he noted that their oppressive tactics were one way peasants were being forced into collectives (they were told that this was their only way to escape the severe penalties of meeting collection quotas).[94] Further research is needed to determine whether Party leaders enforced the penalties stipulated in Circular no. 13 at this time, although they certainly appear to have annulled them.

The Party established a total of 707 new collectives in 1952, and additional 252 in the early months of 1953.[95] In line with Soviet Prime Minister G. Malenkov's "New Course" launched soon after Stalin's death in March 1953, the Romanian leaders halted the collectivization campaign that spring—until the second wave at the end of the 1950s.

In sum, what are we to make of this first wave of collectivization? First, knowing full well the ordeal that had taken place in the Soviet Union during the early 1930s, the Romanian Party leaders (with the exception of Alexandru Moghioroş) preferred to collectivize gradually—as did all the leaders of the newly established People's Democracies.[96] Hence, the rapid collectivization throughout the Bloc during this period was imposed from above by Soviet *dictat* (save for Yugoslavia's Tito). Given this fact, the hesitation and wavering manifested by at least part of the leadership during 1949, and later in 1951, is noteworthy. This issue was certainly connected to the intense power struggles within the Party hierarchy; indeed, it could be argued that Ana Pauker's support of freezing collectivization during 1951 guaranteed her purge the following year. Such maneuvers to temper the campaign, therefore, were clearly a futile exercise in the face of Soviet pressure. But they partly explain (as does the remarkable resistance of the Romanian peasantry) the shifting tides and contradictory moves of Romania's first stage of collectivization.

NOTES

1 "Hotărârea Plenarei Comitetului Central al PMR, 3–5 martie 1949" [Resolution of the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the RWP, March 3–5, 1949], Central National Historical Archives of Romania (ANIC), Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 21/1949, 63; *Hotărârea Plenarei Comitetul Central al PMR, 3–5 martie 1949* (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Politică, 1949), 11–13, 15, 19, 23, 29; ANIC, Fond "1," file 755/1952, 1–2, 49, 106; Gheorghe Surpat, ed., *România în anii socialismului, 1948–1978* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1980), 89.

2 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 31 mai 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, May 31, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," File 55/1949, 6–8; "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 21 iulie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, July 21, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 57/1949, 7.

3 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 31 mai 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, May 31, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 55/1949, 7.

4 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 2 aprilie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, April 2, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 32/1949, 3.

5 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 31 mai 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, May 31, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 55/1949, 7–8. Regarding cows, the Agrarian Commission quickly became aware that "[t]hose who were not in the kolhoz were proceeding to slaughter their cattle, in the fear that they will be taken from them. We had raised the issue of not allowing people to keep a cow everywhere, but to have it depend on the circumstances of each region. But we shouldn't go permanently with this principle; we're talking about the first collectives. "Statement of Ana Pauker, Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, February 24, 1950," ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR— Cancelarie," file 13/1950, 17.

6 Statement of Pavel Chirtoacă, "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a Comitetului Central al PMR, 18 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the Central Committee of the RWP, June 18, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 10.
7 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 21 iulie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, July 21, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 57/1949, 7.
8 ANIC, Fond "1," file 755/1952, 3.
9 "Stenograma şedinţei Comisiilor de organizare a colectivelor, 20 iunie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Commissions Organizing Collective Farms, June 20, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," files 250/1949, 3–4, 6–8, 10–12, 14–15, 17, 42–43, 51–52.
10 "Stenograma şedinţei Comisiei Agrare, 1 septembrie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Commission, September 1, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," file 270/1949, 1–7.
11 ANIC, Fond "1," file 206/1950, 130–131.
12 "Stenograma şedinţei Comisiei Agrare, 3 octombrie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Commission, October 3, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," file 275/1949, 1.
13 "Stenograma şedinţei Comisiei Agrare, 3 octombrie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Commission, October 3, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," file 275/1949, 2.
14 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 26 august 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, August 26, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 72/1949, 3–4.
15 "Stenograma şedinţei Comisiei Agrare, 1 septembrie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Commission, September 1, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," file 270/1949, 4.
16 "Stenograma şedinţei Comisiilor de organizare a colectivelor, 20 iunie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Commissions Organizing Collective Farms, June 20, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," file 250/1949, 9.
17 "Stenograma şedinţei de instruire a secretarilor adjuncţi judeţeni, 5 iulie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of Instructions with the Deputy County Secretaries, July 5, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," file 257/1949, 1–4.
18 ANIC, Fond "1," file 589/1952, 15.
19 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Organizatoric al PMR, 21 aprilie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Organizational Bureau of the RWP, April 21, 1952], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 32/1952, 30.
20 On Pauker see "Stenograma şedinţei Consiliului de Miniştri, 18 decembrie 1951" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Council of Ministers, December 18, 1951], ANIC, Fond "Consiliul de Miniştri—Cabinetul," file 9/1951, 128; on Luca see "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 10 februarie 1951" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, February 10, 1951], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 9/1951, 11.
21 "Stenograma şedinţei Consiliului de Miniştri, 29 septembrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Council of Ministers, September 29, 1950], ANIC, Fond "Consiliul de Miniştri—Cabinetul," file 9/1950, 39–40.
22 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Organizatoric al PMR, 21 aprilie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Organizational Bureau of the RWP, April 21, 1952], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 32/1952, 29–32; "Stenograma şedinţei Consiliului de Miniştri, 18 decembrie 1951" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Council of Ministers, December 18, 1951], ANIC, Fond "Consiliul de Miniştri—Cabinetul," file 9/1951, 124; "Stenograma interogatoriului Anei Pauker de către o comisie PMR, 12 iunie 1953" [Transcript of an Interrogation of Ana Pauker by a Party Commission, June 12, 1953], "Ana Pauker Inquiry" File, Executive Archive of the Central Committee of the RCP, 54.

23 ANIC, Fond 1, file 589/1952, 15.

24 "Stenograma şedinţei instructorilor cu secretarii adjuncţi judeţeni, 5 iulie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of Instructions with the Deputy County Secretaries, July 5, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," file 257/1949, 8; Statements of Pavel Chirtoacă and Iosif Breban, "Stenograma şedinţei instructorilor cu secretarii adjuncţi judeţeni, 5 iulie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the Central Committee of the RWP, June 18, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 10, 38, 62.

25 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 10 octombrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, October 10, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 7.

26 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 4 octombrie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, October 4, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 89/1949, 14–15.

27 "Stenograma şedinţei Comisiei Agrare, 3 octombrie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Commission, October 3, 1949], ANIC, Fond "1," file 275/1949, 3.

28 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 13 aprilie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, April 13, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 80/1950, 5.

29 Alec Nove, "Stalin and Stalinism: Some Introductory Thoughts," in Alec Nove, ed., *The Stalin Phenomenon* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 35.

30 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 4 octombrie 1949" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, October 4, 1949], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 89/1949, 14; "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 10 octombrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, October 10, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR, Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 11.

31 ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 41/1950, 36.

32 ANIC, Fond "1," file 203/1950, 13–54, 299–307.

33 ANIC, Fond "1," file 75/1952, 49, 106.

34 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 10 octombrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, October 10, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 8.

35 "Stenograma unei şedinţe cu secretarii comitetelor judeţene de partid, 20–23 februarie, 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting with the Secretaries of the Party County Committees, February 20–23, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 11/1950, 11, 40.

36 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 10 octombrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, October 10, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 8.

37 Robert Levy, *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 103, 293, fnt. 89; Answers of Ana Pauker to Questions of the Party Commission of the C.C. of the RWP (excerpt), June 12, 1953, "Ana Pauker Inquiry" File, Executive Archive of the Central Committee of the RCP, 6.

38 Gheorghiu-Dej added ominously that "We need to work tenaciously in this area, comrades, with deeds, with setting examples, and, if need be, with administrative measures [a euphemism for coercion]… We need to put an end to this putrid liberalism, which has no place among us… because we can't build socialism peacefully." "Stenograma şedinţei cu secretarii comitetelor judeţene de partid, 20–23 februarie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting with the Secretaries of the Party County Committees, February 20–23, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 11/1950, 190–192.

39 ANIC, Fond 1, File 75/1952, 90; ANIC, Fond "1," files 755/1952, 1–2; 73/1952, 129; 711/1952, 18; "Stenograma Plenarei CC al PMR, 27–29 mai 1952" [Transcript of the Plenary of the Central Committee of the RWP, May 27–29, 1952], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 41/1952, 72; Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a Comitetului Central, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the Central Committee, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 41; "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 10 octombrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, October 10, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 9, 13.

40 Pauker later revealed that "the comrades" (a euphemism for the Soviets) had backed the plan for creating 1,000 new collectives in the spring of 1950. This figure was also stipulated in the first Five Year Plan, redacted during this same period under the supervision of the Soviet advisors. "Stenograma Plenarei CC al PMR, 27–29 mai 1952" [Transcript of the Plenary of the Central Committee of the RWP, May 27–29, 1952], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 41/1952, 72; "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 13 aprilie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, April 13, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 27/1950, 2; "Stenograma Plenarei Comitetului Central al PMR, 15–17 mai 1950" [Transcript of the Plenary of the Central Committee of the RWP, May 1–17], 1950, ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 32/1950, 2, 169.

41 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Organizatoric al PMR, 6 iunie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Organizational Bureau of the RWP, June 6, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 41/1950, 19, 24.

42 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Organizatoric al PMR, 24 mai 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Organizational Bureau of the RWP, May 24, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 41/1950, 30; "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Organizatoric al PMR, 6 iunie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Organizational Bureau of the RWP, June 6, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR— Cancelarie," file 41/1950, 21.

43 Levy, *Ana Pauker*, 104.

44 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 10 octombrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, October 10, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 9.

45 "Stenograma şedinţei cu secretarii comitetelor judeţene de partid şi cu instructorii Comitetului Central, 15 iunie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting with the Secretaries of the Party County Committees and the Instructors of the Central Committee, June 15, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 44/1950, 27, 30, 32.

46 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 10 octombrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, October 10, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 7–9.

47 ANIC, Fond "1," file 755/1952, 8–9.

48 ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 79.

49 ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 41. There were, for instance, only three Agrarian Section instructors present in the entire county of Trei Scaune, where a great deal of abuse took place. ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 36.

50 ANIC, Fond "1," file 755/1952, 5, 9.

51 "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 23 decembrie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, December 23, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 70/1950, 2.

52 ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," files 59/1950, 6–7, 35, 72–75; 42/1950, 13–20; Fond "1," files 755/1952, 3–6; 59/1951, 5–6; 75/1952, 192–196, 246, 318.
53 ANIC, Fond "1," file 73/1952, 130.
54 ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 6, 54, 74; ANIC, Fond "1," files 77/1951, 27–29 75/1952, 318.
55 ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 13–14, 78–79.
56 ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 78–79. The new line on "self-dekulakization" (chiaburi land donations that resulted in the declassification of peasants as chiaburi from the official lists) had already been discussed at the June 15th meeting with the county party secretaries, who were told that reclassifying chiaburi as middle peasants "is not permitted… It's still possible to take the land from the chiaburi, but not in the form of charity. It can be taken by way of judicial sentences, for sabotage, etc." "Stenograma şedinţei cu secretarii comitetelor judeţene de partid şi cu instructorii Comitetului Central, 15 iunie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting with the Secretaries of the Party County Committees and the Instructors of the Central Committee, June 15, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR— Cancelarie," file 44/1950, 20.
57 ANIC, Fond "1," file 75/1952, 119–120.
58 ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 2, 9, 10, 37, 75, 78–79; "Stenograma şedinţei Instructorilor şi Delegaţilor Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 21–22 martie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of Instructors and Delegates of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, March 21–22, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," File 743/1952, 16. The largest number of chiaburi sentenced was in Arad (107), Hunedoara (64), Ilfov (46), Bihor (38), Cluj (35) and Mureş (32). Sentences varied from one month to twelve years in prison; fines varied from 5,000 to 100,000 lei (and in one case 329,000 lei), as well as confiscation of property. ANIC, Fond "1," file 219/1951, 164.
59 ANIC, Fond "1," file 75/1952, 281; Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 77.
60 Examples can be found in a bulletin of the Ministry of the Interior, July 10, 1950, ASRI, Fond "D," file 4640, 162–164.
61 "Raport asupra activităţii Secţiei Agrare a Comitetului Central al PMR de la înfiinţarea sa până în prezent" [Report on the Activities of the Agrarian Section of the Central Committee of the RWP from its Establishment to the Present Time], ANIC, Fond "1," File 755/1952, 7.
62 ANIC, Fond "1," file 755/1952, 7; "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 40; "Note stenografice despre şedinţa ţinută cu secretarii judeţeni, 2 septembrie, 1950" [Note Regarding a Meeting Held with the County Secretaries, September 2, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 56/1950, 8.
63 ANIC, Fond "1," file 73/1952, 37; "Raport asupra activităţii Secţiei Agrare a Comitetului Central al PMR de la înfiinţarea sa până în prezent" [Report on the Activities of the Agrarian Section of the Central Committee of the RWP, from its Establishment to the Present Time], ANIC, Fond "1," file 755/1952, 4; ANIC, Fond "1," file 75/1952, 83–84.
64 ANIC, Fond "1," file 75/1952, 306; "Stenograma şedinţei Secretariatului PMR, 15 iunie 1950" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Secretariat of the RWP, June 15, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 43/1950, 13.
65 At a Central Committee plenary in December 1950, the leadership made do with merely stating that "the socialist sector must predominate" by 1955. "Stenograma Plenarei

Comitetului Central al PMR, 12–13 decembrie 1950" [Transcript of a Plenary of the Central Committee of the RWP, December 12–13, 1950], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 69/1950, 24.

66 ANIC, Fond "1," file 75/1952, 83–84, 307; "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 11, 38; ANIC, Fond "1," file 218/1951, 117.

67 "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 1.

68 Interior Ministry Bulletin, September 26, 1951, ASRI, Fond "D," file 9404, vol. 1, 33; ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," files 42/1950, 18; 59/1950, 75; Fond "1," file 59/1951, 10.

69 ANIC, Fond "1," file 77/1951, 27.

70 ANIC, Fond "1," file 58/1951, 3.

71 MAI Report, September 14, 1951, ASRI Fond "D," file 9494, vol. 1, 55–56, 78; Interior Ministry Bulletin, August 27, 1951, ASRI, Fond "D," file 9404, vol. 1, 121–122, 136, 139; Interior Ministry Bulletin, September 26, 1951, ASRI, Fond "D," file 9404, vol. 1, 33–34, 38, 41, 49, 52; MAI Report, undated, ASRI, Fond "D," file 4638, 200; "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Organizatoric al PMR, 20 septembrie 1951" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Organizational Bureau of the RWP, September 20, 1951], ANIC, Fond "1," file 51/1951, 10.

72 MAI Report, undated, ASRI, Fond "D," file 4638, 199; ANIC, Fond "1," files 51/1951, 10; 75/1952, 65.

73 ANIC, Fond "1," file 755/1952, 10; "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 2–3; "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 1 martie 1951" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, March 1, 1951], ANIC, Fond "1," files 58/1951, 7; 748/1952, 40–41. The last ruling caused "very serious difficulties" in some regions when collective farms refused to give the land. "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 40–41; "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 1 martie 1951" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, March 1, 1951], ANIC, Fond "1," file 58/1951, 61.

74 Answers of Teohari Georgescu to a Party Commission, September 15, 1952, ASRI, Fond "P," file 40009, vol. 32, 213–214.

75 "Stenograma şedinţei cu prim-secretarii comitetelor raionale de partid, 9 februarie 1951" [Transcript of a Meeting with the First Secretaries of the Regional Party Committees, February 9, 1951], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR— Cancelarie," File 10/1951, 30.

76 "Stenograma şedinţei Comitetului Central al PMR, 5 martie 1951" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Central Committee of the RWP, March 5, 1951], ANIC, Fond 1, File 59/1951," 21–22; Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," files 748/1952, 4; 755/1952, 9–10.

77 ANIC, Fond "1," file 75/1952, 71–72; "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," files 748/1952, 4; 69/1952, 21.

78 "Stenograma şedinţei Secţiei Agrare a CC al PMR, 12 iunie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Agrarian Section of the CC of the RWP, June 12, 1952], ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 4.
79 ANIC, Fond "1," files 755/1952, 11; 74/1952, 284.
80 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 26 mai 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, May 26, 1952], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 40/1952, 77. 81 ANIC, Fond "1," files 75/1952, 101, 234, 259; 743/1952, 76.
82 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 26 mai 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, May 26, 1952], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," files 40/1952, 84.
83 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 10 martie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, March 10, 1952], ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 17/1952, 22.
84 ANIC, Fond "1," file 73/1952, 58.
85 "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al PMR, 20 februarie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Politburo of the RWP, February 20, 1952], ANIC, "Fond CC al PCR—Cancelarie," file 11/1952, 94.
86 "Stenograma şedinţei Consiliului de Miniştri, 11 februarie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Council of Ministers, February 11, 1952], ANIC, Fond "Consiliul de Ministri—Cabinetul," file 2/1952, 101; Fond "1," file 75/1952, 75.
87 ANIC, Fond "1," file 75/1952, 42–43, 75, 281, 301, 306, 347, 352–353.
88 "Stenograma interogatoriului luat Anei Pauker de către o comisie de partid a CC al PMR, 18 iunie 1953" [Transcript of an Interrogation of Ana Pauker by a Party Commission of the C.C. of the RWP, June 18, 1953], "Ana Pauker Inquiry" File, Executive Archive of the Central Committee of the RCP, 36.
89 ANIC, Fond "1," files 28/1952, 19; 741/1952, 2, 5.
90 ANIC, Fond "1," file 748/1952, 3.
91 ANIC, Fond "1," file 646/1952, 14; Octavian Roske, "Colectivizarea agriculturii în România, 1949–1962," *Arhivele totalitarianismului*, 1 (1993) 3, 160.
92 "Stenograma şedinţei Consiliului de Miniştri, 1 septembrie 1952" [Transcript of a Meeting of the Council of Ministers, September 1 1952], ANIC, Fond "Consiliul de Ministri—Cabinetul," file 9/1952, 29–30.
93 ANIC, Fond "1," file 754/1952, 55–57.
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The Final Offensive: "The Socialist Transformation of Agriculture" from Slogans to Reality (1953–1962)

MARIUS OPREA

This chapter addresses the ways in which the higher echelons of the Romanian communist leadership planned and carried out collectivization between 1953, the year of Stalin's death, and 1962, the year that marked the end of collectivization. My research relies largely on archival data from the Central Historical National Archives in Bucharest, much of which is completely new. In this paper I seek to uncover how the upper levels of the Party leadership addressed the "sensitive" issue of collectivization and promoted collective forms of ownership. I argue that the focus of policymaking was not the welfare of the peasantry, but the forced enlistment of this class into the Party's radical ideological project. To this day, the economic and human costs of collectivization are hard to assess. Still, on the basis of archival material, this paper attempts to reveal the hidden side of the collectivization process. First, I show that collectivization had political rather than economic motivations, and second, that collectivization is an example of the Romanian communist regime's continuing dependency on, and obsequiousness toward, the USSR and its system of satellite countries.

1. THE PERIOD OF STAGNATION IN COLLECTIVIZATION: 1953–1955

The collectivization of agriculture in Romania, with its accompanying string of abuses stretching from March 1949 to March 1953, stagnated after Stalin's death. This was particularly the case from the summer of 1953 to December 1955, when, at its Second Congress, the RWP decided to resume the "socialist transformation of agriculture." Although one can talk about years of stagnation during this period, the idea of collectivizing did not disappear from the authorities' agenda. Most of the Politburo and Secretariat meetings on collectivization held during these years emphasized administrative issues, such as the situation of sowing and of harvesting, the mechanization of agriculture, requisitions, and the consolidation of existing collective farms. In discussions about collectivization, the top party leaders emphasized the need to avoid abuses while new collective farms were being set up; references to the "Leninist principle" of "free consent" were a staple of

these meetings. At no point did the Party consider abandoning collectivization as such. On the contrary, the leadership emphasized the need to carry out this project fully, albeit with some formal revisions.

1.1. Under the shock of Stalin's death: 1953

On May 23, 1953, RWP General Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej gave a speech at the Congress of Collective Farm Leaders (May 21–23, 1953), organized for the fourth anniversary of the launch of collectivization. In the speech, Gheorghiu-Dej claimed that "thousands of peasants" had demanded to join collective farms (GACs) while the Congress was in session. He also suggested that since the March 3–5, 1953, Central Committee plenary, "over 280,000 working peasants joined 1,966 GACs and almost 2,000 of them joined TOZs." His speech made references to past "insufficiencies" attributable to "the counter-revolutionary actions of right-wing deviationists," who had allegedly "pushed for infringements of free consent," showed bias in favor of chiabur interests, and "infiltrated" the GACs in order to undermine them from within. Gheorghiu-Dej emphasized that, despite all these problems, collectivization itself must not be brought to an end, but should rather be pursued through persuasion and the abandonment of the "brutal methods" that, admittedly, were preferred by party activists: "What kind of collective farming can there be where people who were not convinced of the advantages of collectives were herded together and now long all the time for the return of their small strips of land?"[1] The tone of his speech seemed hardly affected by Stalin's death, which had delayed the Congress by two and a half months. Also unaltered was the typical Stalinist rhetoric of the "Model Charter of the GAC" adopted by the Congress to define the scope and duties of the members: "Let us ensure a complete victory over the *chiaburi*, all exploiters, and the enemies of workers! Let us prevail over the darkness and backwardness of the privately-owned farms."[2]

Romanian communist leaders began viewing the past with a critical eye only in August 1953, when the Soviet Union itself signaled a policy of self-criticism and concessions vis-à-vis its relationship with its satellites. In Bucharest, however, self-criticism was toned down. Reluctant to begin de-Stalinization, Gheorghiu-Dej and the collective leadership were eager to blame bad policies on already imprisoned "right-wing deviationists" or "inimical elements" that had infiltrated the party. Even when self-criticism did surface, it was ably interspersed with references to achievements, or innocuously attached to discussions of general matters.

During the August 19–20, 1953 Central Committee plenary, for example, party leaders assumed no responsibility for collectivization abuses and blamed everything on "irresponsible and provocateur elements." The latter had allegedly adopted "measures that ran counter to the party line… imposed illegal and exaggerated taxes, requisitions and other duties, leading to decreases in the production of individually-owned farms, which their owners left in ruin or even abandoned, thereby damaging the national economy." The plenary asserted the party's commitment to the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, as well as its

commitment to wage a "resolute struggle against the abuses of administrative bodies with regard to taxes, requisitions and so on." Concerning collectivization, it reaffirmed the need to abide by the principle of free consent, and that it would "severely" punish any attempt to resort to administrative compulsion.[3]

This critical tone regarding collectivization abuses was for internal organizational use only. Certain sentences emphasizing the need to strengthen the link between the party and the masses were subsequently purged from the plenary's public communiqué. Any explicit criticism mentioned in the press release was limited to the pace of industrialization (judged as excessively fast in some branches of industry), the underperformance of unions (deemed insufficient in fulfilling their "transmission belt" role between the Party and the masses), or the RWP leadership (depicted as having neglected the principle of collective leadership). The plenary's press release seconded Khrushchev's line on economic development, which stressed increasing agricultural output and developing the consumer goods industry.[4] It further lamented the neglect of the TOZs, seen by Stalinist doctrine as an important intermediary stage in the "socialist transformation of agriculture" and thus—it now suggested—is a particular priority for the party.

The persistence of Stalinist rhetoric notwithstanding, the party considerably relaxed its collectivization policy and its related administrative and repressive practices during the 1953–1955 period. This was obvious even at the Ministry of the Interior, which drafted reports condemning past abuses against peasants. A December 1953 Ministry of the Interior report, for example, blamed the arrest of 34,738 peasants and the staging of 438 show trials from 1951–1952 on the so-called "right-wing deviationists" Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca and Teohari Georgescu.[5]

Stalin's death also brought about a number of administrative concessions. Thus, on June 11, 1953, the Council of Ministers issued a resolution cancelling overdue requisitions for all peasants for the year of 1951, and for peasants who lived in flood-affected areas that year.[6] At the August 1953 plenary meeting, the party adopted a series of measures relaxing the taxation and requisition system, with the aim of giving incentives to private farmers and "kick-starting" agricultural production in the GACs. On September 10, 1953, the payment of overdue requisitions from 1952 was cancelled for all categories of peasants and certain kinds of products (with the exception of wheat).[7] The communist government also gave partial tax breaks to peasants who signed purchase contracts with the state, with the express purpose of encouraging animal husbandry, silkworm production and the development of orchards. At the same time, the government gave a 50 percent tax cut to all private farmers and a 75 percent tax cut to GAC and TOZ members with the goal of improving supply in urban farmer's markets, which by that time were plagued by chronic food shortages.[8]

1.2. Expectant relaxation: 1954–1955

Toward the end of 1953, the communist government launched an active policy to bolster the GACs and TOZs, without, however, putting too much pressure on privately owned farms. In May 1953, during the Congress of Collective Farm

Leaders, Gheorghiu-Dej inveighed against the Party cadres for having "deluded themselves that their mission was over and [that they] had no further responsibility in the evolution and consolidation of GACs," which, he suggested, had been consequently "left adrift."[9] For this reason, and given the slowdown in establishing new GACs, the authorities focused during that period on strengthening the existing GACs. The adoption of a number of concrete policies reinforced this new focus on consolidating rather than expanding the socialist farm sector. In October 1953, the government initiated a massive land transfer of 448,000 ha from the state reserves to collective farms.[10] In the same vein, Government Decree no. 505 of December 1953 offered preferential tax breaks to collectivized peasants as an incentive to join a GAC. For the year it was formed, and for two consecutive years thereafter, collective farm members would pay no income tax. In the third year, the tax for the GAC would be only 1 percent of the revenues of the previous year. As for TOZ members, tax cuts were made proportional to the land each family provided to the farm.[11] Finally, on January 25, 1954, the government resolved to grant 10 to 20 percent tax cuts to GACs and TOZs that had been established over the past two years, and exempted collective farm members from the payment of requisition quotas.[12]

Nonetheless, reliance on propaganda and incentives to spur the establishment of new GACs and TOZs was by no means an effective strategy. Without coercion, collectivization simply stagnated during the three years following Stalin's death. The peasants clearly perceived it as a form of repression and dispossession. The only visible success was the forming of what the authorities regarded as an "acceptable" number of TOZs.

The Central Committee's Agriculture Department and its head, Alexandru Moghioroş, unsuccessfully tried to resuscitate the collectivization campaign through a number of different means, as noted in a January 28, 1954 meeting. The results of a recent nationwide assessment of progress, carried out by Agriculture Department activists and district leaders, were disappointing. For instance, many peasants who had signed up for collective farm membership during the preceding years had long since withdrawn. More specifically, in Brăneşti (Vlădeşti commune, Bujoru district), only 15 entry petitions were left of the initial 26; in the village of Scorțaru (Brăila county), only 10 remained of the initial 35. According to an agriculture instructor, "peasants argued that they had no clue what collective farming was about. We had to write things down on the blackboard, to explain it clearly to everybody. People misunderstood the whole thing, and some things remained misunderstood even by some Party members." Another instructor visited "a weak local Party chapter where he had been unable to summon a meeting with the peasants, who, summoned again and upon hearing the meeting was about collectivization, did not bother to send even one representative to the meeting." The inspector also added that he had witnessed "forms of behavior that were hostile to the Party line."[13] Replacing repression by intensified propaganda efforts proved realistically impossible. At that time each district instructor was in charge of no fewer than 15 or 16 local Party chapters and therefore could work with each

chapter for no more than a couple of hours every month. The note concluded that it was not surprising that "there were hesitations with regard to GAC membership" even among local party members.[14]

Hence, the ongoing policy of relaxing the collectivization campaign throughout 1955 demonstrated a failure to achieve the "socialist transformation of agriculture" on the basis of free consent. It was also, however, the result of international détente and the efforts of Warsaw Pact countries to become United Nations members. In the meantime, the Party's December 26, 1954 decision to scrap the food retailing system of rations,[15] as well as its granting additional tax cuts, provided new impetus to the growth of free markets. Requisition quotas were the only remaining constraint, but they were now less exacting than they had been during the first three years of collectivization. Gheorghiu-Dej himself gave an explicit endorsement for further supporting small private farms in his March 1, 1955 speech at the Conference of Foremost Agricultural Workers.[16] In addition to reviewing the GACs' achievements, Gheorghiu-Dej praised the contribution of privately owned farms to a record corn harvest (at that time a priority crop for the communist leadership), and even congratulated the highest producers among them by name.

The Party's emphasis on corn harvests was seen as a chance to encourage the consumer goods industry and to improve the supply of corn flour, dairy, and meats to food stores and markets. This idea was hardly an invention of "Romanian experts." At a Politburo meeting concerning agriculture on June 5, 1954,[17] Soviet experts explicitly advised this course of action, which was in compliance with Khrushchev's theory of making socialist agriculture more dynamic by promoting incentives for small private farm production. In order to follow the Soviet policy blueprint, and to encourage state contracts for animals and poultry, the Romanian government significantly reduced requisition quotas on January 27 and February 7, 1955. For instance, in exchange for contracting a 120 kg pig, the requisition quota for corn decreased by 1.8 tons.[18]

The incentives for small private farm production reflected a more nuanced policy toward the *chiaburi* as well. Thus, beginning on November 8, 1954, the Politburo ordered a systematic revision of *chiabur* lists. More specifically, "*chiaburi* who are old and sick, or who have declared they could not work all their land" were granted the opportunity to rent their land to "poor peasants, via the People's Council," with the tenants paying the related taxes and requisition quotas. Many blacklisted peasants used this window to remove themselves from the infamous lists, leaving only those designated "exploiters of the work of others." The number of *chiaburi* had actually decreased since the onset of collectivization, as land that the well-to-do peasants could not work by themselves was confiscated or "donated" to the state. Through this policy, the *chiaburi* who transferred their land to poor peasants were reclassified as well. Now this group of *chiaburi* would have to pay taxes only on the land they still retained, and they were not subject to the "legal" increases in quotas that were usually assessed on *chiaburi*.

As a consequence of these developments, the number of officially listed *chia-*

buri, as well as the level of requisitions collected by the state from them, decreased dramatically. The communist authorities decided that they could not go so far with this "relaxation." A June 1, 1955 report issued in Constanța county noted that only 193 of 3,611 *chiaburi* had *not* been reclassified as middle peasants. The report describes many such examples. Ex-*chiabur* Stan Subțirica, from Nicolae Bălcescu village (Medgidia district), "whose 49 hectares of land and four horses easily made him qualify as a *chiabur*, had been taken off the lists by conveniently declaring he could till only 14 hectares."[19] The report also noted a new category of peasants no longer considered *chiaburi:* those seeking approval to send their children to high school and college. The economic consequences of the drastic decline in the number of listed *chiaburi* were more worrisome. A report showed that, whereas the 2,411 *chiabur* households listed in 1954 owed the state 120,504 tons of cereals, in 1955 there were only 167 *chiabur* households remained owing only 417 tons of cereals. From declassifying *chiaburi*, then, the state lost 12,090 tons in Constanța alone.[20] Consequently, the Constanța county party leadership concluded that the policy that had led to an "artificial" decrease in the number of *chiaburi* was a major mistake. They decided to re-list "all those who are in fact *chiaburi*" and to "warn the *chiaburi* who had rented their land to poor peasants that they were supposed to get their land back in the fall" and pay revised taxes and requisition quotas for the land that was in fact theirs.[21]

Also noteworthy is that during these two years, police repression abated, with the repressive organs reduced to carrying out surveillance of collective farms and private landowners. As a general policy, the Securitate closely monitored instances of discontent, requesting that party activists take administrative measures to remedy the situation.[22] One can argue that the international context and Romania's membership in the UN contributed to these less repressive policies and to the release of some categories of political prisoners. However, this liberalization was only brief.

2. COLLECTIVIZATION RELAUNCHED: POLITICAL DECISIONS AND THEIR CONTEXT

The summer of 1955 marked a renewed focus on the "socialist transformation of agriculture" at the level of the central Party leadership. This put an end to the liberalization measures adopted for non-collectivized peasants. During the festivities of August 23, 1955,[23] Gheorghiu-Dej declared socialist agriculture "the only way to assure plenty and wealth" and boasted that "the socialist sector of agriculture represented over 26 percent of the country's arable land."[24] On August 4, the new Ministry of Requisitions was created to supervise the requisition system more rigorously. On September 13, the government banned free trade of foodstuffs, allegedly in order to prevent speculation in cereal prices. The government also made it illegal for private farmers to transport their produce by train, truck, or ship to a now highly regulated market. Failure to comply was punishable by fines

between 100 and 150 lei as well as by the confiscation of merchandise.[25] It thus became obvious that authorities had not given up on the "socialist transformation of agriculture."

At the end of 1955, the number of GACs increased by only 82 units nationwide, to a total of 2,152 GACs. In contrast, the number of TOZs almost doubled, from 2,833 in 1954 to 4,471 as a result of reductions in quotas and taxes for this form of association. Restrictions on free markets suggested that the central authorities were not increasing liberalization, but were rather toying with the idea of resuming their former policies of total social and economic control. In the same vein, collectivization was very prominent in political discourse and planning in 1955. For instance, 1955 and early 1956 witnessed debates and experiments with novel collectivization methods in certain regions (e.g., the Galați region), which made it apparent that the authorities had never given up their collectivization plans. For this reason, 1955 should be considered as the year that marked the revival of "the socialist transformation of agriculture" and 1956—the year of the Hungarian Revolution—as the year of experimenting with a new political project. But the final stage of collectivization was delayed by the events occurring in Hungary. External rather than internal factors urged caution, in a context on which the general mood had become tense and any unpopular steps toward collectivization might risk generating open hostility against the regime.

2.1. Abandoning the "new course" and resuming collectivization: December 1955

At its Second Congress in December 23–28, 1955, the Party resolved to resume and aggressively pursue collectivization. On this occasion, it became clear that the leadership had decided to abandon the liberalization of the "new course."[26] Evidence in this respect comes from the distribution of public investment: 56 percent of funds were allocated for industrialization, 12.5 percent for agriculture, and only 6 percent for consumer goods. As for agriculture, the Party was determined to collectivize between 60 and 70 percent of Romania's arable land over the next five years. To this end, Gheorghiu-Dej gave special emphasis to collectivization, resuscitating the themes of the March 3–5, 1949 Plenary.[27] He noted that the socialist agricultural sector had doubled in size, from 12 percent of arable land in 1950 to 26.5 percent in 1953. Socialism, he asserted, "conquered important landmarks in the villages, which opened up the possibility of strengthening and accelerating the socialist transformation of agriculture." The party's main priority during the next five-year plan, he continued, was to "accelerate political and organizational efforts to consolidate and increase in the number of GACs and TOZs," as well as to encourage the creation of simple forms of association, for the peasants' own good and in strict observance of "free consent."[28] This formulation defined the very essence of forced collectivization, a "good" that the peasants so stubbornly refused to accept.

The decisions of the Congress made evident the Stalinist conservatism of the Bucharest communists, who preferred to renounce the "new course" so that their

positions would not be jeopardized by liberalization—a strategy that the 1956 events in Hungary and Poland would soon prove correct, from their point of view. In any case, shortly after the Congress, the authorities set in motion the huge party and state apparatus toward the goal of collectivizing fully. As on many other occasions, the party first devised a grand policy in the name of the "socialist transformation of agriculture" and only afterwards bothered to analyze the actual situation and devise a strategy and method of implementing it.

2.2. Constructing the bureaucratic levers for resuming collectivization

After its Second Congress, the party took the first step to restructure the Ministry of Agriculture. This was a high-profile process, as was substantiated by the January 4, 1956 meeting of such high-level apparatchiks as Nicolae Ceauşescu, Emil Bodnăraş, Iosif Chişinevschi, and Alexandru Moghioroş. Party leaders created two new ministries, one for GACs and one for forestry, and they stripped the Ministry of Agriculture of several sectors. Responding to a comrade on this latter point, Moghioroş replied trenchantly: "You were present at the Congress yourself and you saw what the socialist transformation of agriculture was about and what the new goals are. We must carry out these commitments. In the cities, we have socialist industry, and trade and transportation are in large part socialist. In agriculture, however, things are otherwise. Since we have imposed the task of making the socialist sector dominant [in agriculture], and moreover solidly dominant, we need a strong ministry," whose job will be to "deal with everything that is strictly related to the socialist transformation of agriculture." In practical terms, the new ministry must "strengthen the GACs, TOZs, and SMTs… alongside resolving the problems of the annual harvest." At the end of the meeting, propaganda chief Iosif Chişinevschi summarized the point made during the Second RWP Congress by asserting "one cannot have socialism in cities and capitalism in the countryside." Accelerating the pace of collectivization, he emphasized, was an inevitable process, considering "the progress made in electrification, in greater numbers of GACs and TOZs, and in improved peasant consciousness." However, he then contradicted this last point when he called on party activists "to refrain from forcing peasants to join collective farms."[29]

On January 10, 1956, less than a week after the Ministry of Agriculture's reorganization, the Politburo conducted an in-depth review of the problems of collectivization and the annual harvest, which was underway.[30] Central to this analysis was the mechanization of agriculture, which would play a crucial role in collectivization. The state agricultural sector was increasingly well-equipped with farm machinery; SMTs possessed 13,800 tractors and GACs 6,300 tractors—with 1,700 new tractors delivered in 1955 alone. Despite this, however, the state farms had failed to meet the plan requirements for the previous year. Of the work done by the 12,524 tractors, 4,900 sowing machines, and 5,164 weeding machines used during the fall season, 52.4 percent was for GACs, 15.5 percent for TOZs, and 32 percent for other jobs.[31]

The Politburo blamed this failure on privately-owned farms. Because the state had been late in its payments to the tractor stations, it argued, tractor drivers naturally first sought employment with private farmers, who not only paid on time, but also supplemented the fees with small gifts. The state, by contrast, seemed to have forgotten the tractor drivers.[32] Failure to meet the regime's goals was compounded by the poor condition of machinery. The party leadership realized that its efforts to modernize farming overlooked the fact that tractor drivers were insufficiently trained, were not given proper incentives, and worked in substandard conditions. As the SMTs were built right out in the fields, tractor drivers were often compelled to sleep outdoors, unless they could find someone to shelter them. Alexandru Moghioroş bluntly noted that "most of the SMTs do not even have a house to go into. People come, they learn at the SMT, and then they leave. You recall what it was like in 1945. Housing was not provided because funds for construction were not approved." Given these conditions, drivers not surprisingly showed little interest in tractor maintenance: no fewer than 13,272 tractors required repairs, and less than 17.5 percent passed the annual technical inspection that year.[33] Even though the state-owned tractors had been leased by 2,090 GACs, 3,584 TOZs and 5,674 farms attached to Peoples' Councils or Ministries, their poor condition and over-consumption of fuel were blamed solely on the work they did for private farmers. Agriculture Minister Constantin Popescu suggested that fuel had been wasted on the plots of 250,000 non-collectivized families, while Moghioroş insisted that the "atomization" of work was responsible for causing productivity to fall, though he made no effort to sensitize peasants adequately concerning the advantages of consolidating large fields in associations.[34]

Less than a week after its restructuring, the Ministry of Agriculture seemed taken by surprise by the most recent political decisions and its new prominence in relaunching the campaign, a role for which it proved to be not at all ready. Ministry inspectors were criticized for their lack of involvement in collectivization and GAC activities. Eugen Alexe, of the Central Committee's Agriculture Department, revealed that "it is true that they were not concerned with the problems of the cooperative units. The management occupied with this work in the Ministry had declared that the problems of the collectives were the business of the government and the Party, more than of the Ministry." He was asked to repeat his statement, as if the other participants had not heard right. He did so with anecdotes from his field trips when GAC chairmen drew his attention to the lack of interest of the Ministry officials: "they merely follow the actions taken by the Party and the government: they record deeds or actions, but it is rare that they initiate any."[35]

In this context, Nicolae Ceauşescu set the tone for harsh criticism of the Ministry of Agriculture. He had obtained his own technical data through the Agricultural Department, and it was much bleaker than that presented at the meeting.[36] Alexandru Drăghici jumped in promptly, accusing the Ministry officials of "accustoming themselves to dumping the collectivization burden on the Party's

shoulders." The Ministry of the Interior attributed the failure of the agricultural plan to "demobilization" resulting from a lack of accountability, combined with "many hostile elements within the Ministry of Agriculture, elements with dubious pasts."[37] More balanced (and much closer to the truth), Moghioroş blamed the plan's failure on the particularly unfavorable conditions of the previous year. "We could hang ministers and their subordinates five times" he said, "but the wheat would still be lost." He tried to remind those present of the summer drought and the rainy fall of the previous year. "…we needed 54 days and 42,000 soldiers to harvest the crop and we still lost 400 kilograms per hectare on 180,000 hectares at the GASs."[38]

The cold shower for the Ministry of Agriculture continued. There followed criticism of the lack of concern for the collectives, about which Gheorghe Apostol affirmed with irritation, saying "nothing is said in the Ministry's report." He added that the only useful thing he got out of the meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture was some news on the pace of sowing. This was, without a doubt, much below the level of a meeting of the Politburo.

The final point of this first technical meeting after the decision to relaunch the "socialist transformation of agriculture" was made by Ioan Chiş, a Party activist from the Agriculture Department, who joined Apostol in slamming the ministry over its lack of involvement: "We hold this meeting following the Party Congress. The spirit of the Congress, the fight for the socialist transformation of agriculture must be reflected in every act we take. The Ministry leadership must think of this not as only the duty of the Party branches but as its own duty too." For this campaign, he said, "all forces must be used to organize GACs and TOZs. People going [to the villages] from the Party and from the state need instruction in this problem so they can carry out political work and persuade the peasantry. There are very many, tens of thousands of peasants who want to organize, and if they do not establish new TOZs and GACs, it is our fault […] Every living thing in the Ministry of Agriculture must be in the field."[39]

In addition to mobilizing the state apparatus, an important role was assigned to a Party apparatus reoriented and specialized for this purpose. On February 4, 1956, the Central Committee reorganized its Agriculture Department: "…[T]o improve the recruitment and the appointment of cadres and to control the implementation of Party and government decisions in the fields of agriculture, forestry, and collections, we propose to increase the number of sectors from 4 to 9 and the workers of the Department from 51 to 69." The growth of the department responsible for collective farms, conducted by a chief with 6 subordinate instructors, gained prominence in order to "monitor compliance with the Party and government decisions aimed at strengthening existing collective farms and at guiding the working peasants on the road to the socialist transformation of agriculture."[40]

The same meeting analyzed the situation of the village chapters of the communist youth organizations. It was not at all good. For example, in the village of Dobroteşti (Roşiorii de Vede district) with 7,764 inhabitants and approximately 1,300 youngsters of "eligible age," there were only 136 members of the youth or-

ganization, mostly employed in the local bureaucracy or the collectives of the commune. Virgil Trofin submitted a report (which was accepted) recommending improvement in the rural sector and was assigned the task of energizing communist activism in the ranks of the youth.[41]

Finding a way for the "socialist transformation of agriculture" mandated by the Second Congress was not proving to be easy, and the general state of agriculture was not encouraging. Disorganization in the "socialist sector" was generating "billions in losses" in agriculture and it was impossible for this sector to compete with the efficient small owners. Moghioroş acknowledged the problem directly: "I understand you, I myself was one of those who cursed at the state and collective farms."[42] However, as was the case throughout the entire socialist period, political decisions took priority over economic logic.

These first meetings of the Party leadership put in evidence one fact: although the imperative of accelerating the "socialist transformation of agriculture" was clearly announced, no strategy for action had been formulated, nor were the institutions charged with coordinating the work at all ready. Efforts to reorganize and mobilize the bureaucracy and rejuvenate the activist network that had previously managed the collectivizing operations were not accompanied by a clear plan. The officials and activists knew what they had to do, namely, increase the number of new GACs and TOZs. However, without the repression used in the first three years of collectivization, they did not know how to do it.

2.3. The "Galați experiment": designing strategies to resume collectivization

On June 11, 1956, the Secretariat of the Central Committee convened a new meeting, chaired by Gheorghiu-Dej and attended by Iosif Chişinevschi, Janos Fazekaş, Nicolae Ceauşescu, Ion Cozma, Leonte Răutu, and Vintilă Marin (chief of the Agriculture Department of the Central Committee).[43] After the Second Party Congress, this meeting was the most decisive for relaunching collectivization. It offered the solution, the ideal model for carrying out collectivization. Point 1 of the meeting was a report presented "on the way the Galați Regional Committee of the Party had organized political work for the socialist transformation of agriculture." This report, signed by Radu Dulgheru, First Party Secretary of the Galați Region, was registered with the Central Committee of the RWP as no. 1056 on May 25. The unusually high level of attention paid to a local report, and the analysis of the means by which the local party apparatus was organized to achieve the "socialist transformation of agriculture," were indications of its experimental value of the process that had unfolded in the Galați Region.

What made the leadership precisely choose the Galați region for the experiment? Most probably, Gheorghiu-Dej made the choice himself. The report he presented to the Second Congress praised the political work of the activists and "working peasants" of Galați. As early as 1947–48, they had succeeded in eliminating boundaries between owners to create large consolidated fields, easier to work with the equipment from the tractor station. "The experience on the ground

in Galați," Gheorghiu-Dej told the meeting, "and the ways in which peasants joined forces to work the land in common, with tractors and machines provided by the state, deserves to be studied and spread to all regions."[44] The report of Prime-Secretary Dulgheru to the Central Committee confirmed that the Party leadership was also effective in mobilizing its staff to increase the collectivization rate of the region. "The regional leadership, on the orders of the Politburo, commissioned a study on the real situation in agriculture and prospects for future development as outlined in the Second Party Congress."[45] Subsequently, at the beginning of 1956, a large number of Party activists and agriculture experts visited the villages for "mass work." By the 15th of May, there was a three percent increase in the number of collectivized peasants. GAC membership reached 10.7 percent, and TOZ membership, 14 percent. By the end of the year, the regional leadership expected to see a doubling of the number of collectivized farmers to 21.8 percent of the population of the Galați region (i.e., 45,246 families enrolled in GACs and 53,321 families in TOZs). No one knew (since the report was silent on this point) the basis of so precise a statistical prediction.

In any case, a look at the dynamics of collectivization in the past did not encourage such optimistic estimates nor provide an explanation of why this particular region offered, in spite of all the "field consolidation" lauded by Gheorghiu-Dej, heightened peasant receptivity to the socialist transformation of agriculture. Previous years provided no reasons for an optimistic prognosis, either short or long term. On the contrary, one can note rather slow progress. Thus, in 1949 there were only six GACs representing 508 families and 0.3 percent of the agricultural land in the Galați region. In 1950, the number had risen to 88 GACs, with 6,718 families and 3.2 percent of agricultural land. By the end of 1952, when brutality and pressure lessened, 146 GACs were recorded, containing 7.2 percent of the peasants in the region. In 1953 only 20 new GACs appeared, while 1954 saw not a single new collective farm. Collectivization efforts resumed in 1955, but also without notable results until the first months of 1956. On May 25, 1956, the date of the presentation of the report, there existed 289 GACs, with 22,261 families (representing 10.7 percent of the population and 16.9 percent of the agricultural land).

Greater success followed the congress: "Thus, by May 15, 1956, 14,839 families were in collectives, compared with only 8,655 in 1955." Based on this success in these last months, activists projected that, by the end of 1960, GACs would enroll 162,450 collective families (77 percent), with another 20.7 percent enrolled in TOZs—that is, 98.4 percent of the region's rural population and 90.8 percent of its agricultural land. This meant, practically, the completion of collectivization.[46]

It was a lovely dream, spun out over many pages and founded solely on the results obtained by the brigades of activists sent to the region's villages in the first four months of 1956. The dreaming did not stop here. The report also predicted that, as a consequence of merging the fields, the region's agricultural output in 1960 would increase significantly compared with 1955 (i.e., corn and wheat by 25 percent; cattle by 10 percent; the number of piglets from 8.5 per sow to 13;

the wool output from 1.6 kg per sheep to 3 kg).[47] Although the regional committee's report did not explain how the regional activists had concluded that the end of the collectivization process would inspire the pigs to produce so many more piglets and the sheep so much more wool, these prognoses were met with great enthusiasm at the highest levels of the Party. The first sign of this is visible even on the pages of the report presented to the Central Committee by Prime-Secretary Dulgheru, with large passages underlined and annotations such as "excellent and interesting" written in the margins in Gheorghiu-Dej's blue ink. The second sign of this special interest is the discussion of this document at such a high level in the Party.

High-ranking Party activists also discussed the strategies that led to progress in collectivizing. According to Dulgheru, it all began with sustained political work involving intense briefings on Gheorghiu-Dej's report. The Galați region boasted 10,392 full and candidate Party members in the villages, of which 3,108 were in GACs and 3,000 in TOZs, while 4,284 were individual farmers (half poor peasants and half middle). Following these briefings, Party members began to enroll in the GACs: in the Filimon Sârbu district, for example, only 13 of the 1,344 Party members who owned land were not in either GACs or TOZs. Another key to success was the fact that "the majority of territorial instructors had moved into the villages in which they worked." The Party had given up on the old method of sending out "teams from the center" (except for the art brigades) and they had to select from those "who had the greatest influence in the villages." This practice of sending "comrades from the center" to the countryside ended in 1955 because they "went over the heads of the local Party authorities and undermined their authority." Propaganda instructors and propagandists who moved to the countryside worked "in teams and groups of houses" and were much more efficient and attuned to local conditions.[48] They used the wealth of material that continued to arrive from the city—propaganda posters with ideal farm households, films shown with the aid of 10 mobile cinemas (with films suitable "for village life" in place of the normal offerings) or expositions organized in the regional centers by 100 GACs selling produce—a fact that on one hand benefited the cooperatives and, on the other, provided a good advertisement in the urban setting for the collective farms.[49]

Beyond the triumphant presentation of results and the exaggerated perspective, a glimpse of the truth could be seen even between the lines of the report presented by the regional party committee. Thus, of the 14,000 families that chose the "socialist path" in 1956, the majority chose TOZs over GACs.[50] Also, numerous infringements of the principle of "free consent" were recorded. The report cited the example of comrade Constantinescu, who had threatened to charge with theft a peasant "Party member with great influence" because "he did not wish to join the GAC." In another place, "higher taxes had been levied on individual peasants." "Operative measures" were solicited against "hostile elements" and "mysticism," a foreshadowing of the atmosphere of unrest in the rural world of the region that began with the decision to relaunch collectivization.[51] This turbulence

was probably related to the recent dismantling of the Vladimireşti Monastery, a key religious and pilgrimage site in the region.

The real face of the "socialist transformation of agriculture" under these conditions is illustrated by a June 8, 1956 report (issued three days before the Central Committee discussed the "Galați Experiment"), by a brigade of inspectors that the Secretariat dispatched to the Galați region.[52] Highlighting certain deficiencies not recorded in the report, they remarked on the poor work participation of the collectivized peasants, the majority of whom were satisfied to continue to work their small remaining plots. In 1955, 10,000 out of 35,000 peasants from 12 GACs did not fulfill their minimum number of workdays, and 8,000 did not work a single day.[53] This situation was not only encountered in Galați; on June 22, 1956, the Central Committee ordered that schoolchildren be used to finish the grain harvest in many regions. Moghioroş admitted that the harvest was meager again and "owing to theft, waste, and bad organization, only small quantities arrived in the state granaries."[54]

The conclusion came naturally: the "socialist path" was not perceived as a necessary and timely choice, but was instead opposed by many peasants. Collectivization made them feel a sense of resignation, and they felt that the state "had taken their land." "Propaganda" successes in the villages were adjusted even at the highest levels of the party: in the margins of a measure to send a certain number of copies of the newspaper *Înainte* [Forward] to the People's Councils for wider distribution to the peasantry, Gheorghiu-Dej noted cynically, "and that's where they'll stay!"[55]

Even with all these signs, the authors of the Galați report concluded that "the collectivization goals set by the regional Party leadership were fully doable."[56] The outcome of this view is easy to predict. At the June 11, 1956 Central Committee meeting in which these results were presented, Gheorghiu-Dej, Iosif Chişinevschi, Nicolae Ceauşescu, Ion Cozma, Janos Fazekaş and Leonte Răutu saw *what was possible* and decided to relaunch collectivization in the whole country. First, they asked that a five-year assessment plan be drafted for each district, based on a concrete study, in order to gauge the potential for the "socialist transformation of agriculture." They stipulated that the study include the weight appropriate for the cooperative sector and how much it could produce in each zone, and they ordered the "development" of existing TOZs into GACs across the country. The "Galați Experiment" had succeeded. At the June 11 meeting, the action plan for that region became the national strategy:

> In order to disseminate the good experience of the Galați Regional Committee on a national scale, we demand that the Party publish an article in the press. It is recommended that this article be studied by the regional and district Party cadres with a view to the implementation of the good methods used by the Galați Regional Committee, suitable to each specific region.[57]

The final communist offensive against the Romanian village of old had a strategy, and was ready to begin.

By the end of 1956, Romania had 2,564 GACs and 8,130 TOZs. The number of GACs grew by 412 nationwide, or a 20 percent increase. The number of TOZs grew by 50 percent after the Second Congress in December 1955.[58] After the "Galați experiment," collectivization was extended nationwide. At the June 16–19, 1956 Plenary Meeting of the RWP, party leaders outlined in detail the measures to be taken "to carry out the collectivization tasks outlined by the Second Congress." Relying on the Galați experience, these measures were further detailed at a Politburo meeting ten days later.[59] The requirements of the central leadership were imposed on practically every region of the country, with the intention of creating new collectives at a dynamic pace, using methods similar to those of the Galați activists. Armies of activists and state bureaucrats were dispatched to deal with peasants who were still free. At the price of reviving the abusive and repressive methods of old, these were required to prove to the leadership *what was possible.* The last wave of collectivization had begun.

3. REPRESSION RETURNS: 1957–1961

The return to the accelerated pace of collectivization characteristic of the Stalinist era occurred between 1957 and 1961. In 1957, the Party ordered that increased administrative and financial pressure be put on small peasant farms. By 1958, these measures were in full swing. Two years later, the final assault on small private farms had reached its apogee. The endpoint of collectivization is marked by the plenary of June 30–July 1, 1961, when the party ordered the consolidation of the newly established GACs. By April 1962, when Gheorghiu-Dej proclaimed the end of collectivization, more than 3.5 million peasant families were immersed in the totalitarian experiment called "the socialist transformation of agriculture."

3.1. 1957: The year of administrative and financial constraints

The harvest campaign of 1956 was a good opportunity to implement the first step in the final offensive against small farms. On September 5, 1956, Alexandru Moghioroş summoned many Central Committee activists to be sent into the countryside, calming their fears about what they perceived to be the degradation of their job:

> Comrades, in order to carry out the resolutions made by the Central Committee during its plenary, you are to be dispatched to some GACs where you will do your jobs not only during the harvest, but also for a longer period of time. Do not be afraid because you will not stay there permanently—this is only for as long as it takes to stabilize the situation.[60]

On September 20, the Politburo decided to expand Moghioroş's new initiative, putting into practice a "plan for the assistance of the regional party committees for the fall agricultural campaign." It was decided to dispatch 2,500 Central Committee activists to state farms. Under a joint protocol between the Ministries of Agriculture and Education, they harvested with the help of schoolchildren and students taken out of class during the months of September and October. Many leading Party figures took their turn on the ground: Bodnăraş went to Iaşi, Suceava, and Bacău; Miron Constantinescu to Galaţi and Constanţa; Constantin Pârvulescu to Craiova and Piteşti; Alexandru Drăghici to Ploieşti, the Stalin region, and the Hungarian Autonomous Region; Nicolae Ceauşescu to Timişoara, Oradea, and Hunedoara; and finally, Janos Fazekaş to Cluj and Baia Mare. Their job was to coordinate the dispatch of district-level Party cadres to specific villages and to supervise their activities.[61]

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 delayed the dynamics of collectivization propelled by these Party armies for a short period of time. But the process did not stop. At the plenary of December 27–29, 1956, Gheorghiu-Dej proclaimed that the "socialist transformation of agriculture" must continue:

> We should encourage the tendency manifesting itself in many TOZs that, as they develop and the consciousness of the peasants grows, they progress on the basis of their own material interests to the superior forms of collectivization. We must permanently engage in the work of enlightenment and persuasion in the ranks of the individual peasant workers, showing them with concrete actions that peasants who have progressed on the road of cooperation have much greater advantages.[62]

Those advantages were extensively debated in this meeting. Thus, the leadership decided to lift quotas for grain and meat owed by collectivized farm members and very poor peasants. Beginning on January 1, 1957, the entire peasantry breathed a little easier: the quota system for the production of cereals was replaced with bilateral purchase and sale contracts. This move was adopted to alleviate discontent among peasants and to preempt Hungarian or Polish-style violent clashes from transforming the Romanian villages into theaters of confrontation between communists backed by the police and the *Securitate*, and the rest of the population.

As usual, the press releases and public speeches did not reflect the extremely cynical nature of the debates, or the special type of political schizophrenia developed during this time, in which one "line" was rapidly forgotten in favor of another. For instance, in December 1956, a position that had been seen as blasphemous only a short while before suddenly turned into a policy that, of course, had to be revered. Thus, the majority of the speakers at the plenary of December 27–29, 1956, as the minutes of the debate show,[63] considered the changes to be "a powerful spur to the alliance with the working class," and "a measure received with enthusiasm by the peasantry" that would bring "great joy to the peasant workers"

and so forth. The official communiqué following the meeting revealed that quotas for wheat, rye, corn, potatoes, sunflowers and milk would be scrapped on January 1, 1957 because they were a "current fund of agricultural products that will constitute for the future the road to developing a system of contracts on the basis of a free exchange." At the same time the meeting decided to increase the prices offered to peasants for meat and wool,[64] but to exempt from these quotas any peasants and GAC members who had less than a hectare of land.[65] Also, debts for undelivered quotas for 1955 were erased. During the same meeting, the party decided to dismantle the Ministry of Requisitions and replace it with a State Committee for the Capitalization of Agricultural Products [*Comitetul de Stat pentru Valorificarea Produselor Agricole*]. This was to work through contracting cooperatives, coordinated by the executive committee of the Regional People's Councils. Any attempt to bypass these centers and sell directly in marketplaces was to be punished severely, being considered speculation—which greatly limited the scope of this "liberalization" of trade between village and city.[66]

Nonetheless, behind closed doors, Gheorghiu-Dej admitted the failure of the Party's agricultural policies: agricultural production lagged behind industrial development.[67] The structure of Romania's population subsequent to the forced industrialization policy required the development of agriculture. The urban population increased from 3.4 million in 1938 to 5.5 million in 1956—and consumption increased proportionally, but not the production of agricultural goods. This could be assured only in years with good harvests; otherwise the government was forced to import. The abandonment of the system of requisitions or quotas was seen as a way to increase output in agriculture by appealing to the "economic interests of the peasantry" and by facilitating free farmers' markets in urban centers. But this did not mean any reduction in communist aggression against the free peasant, which was dictated by the economic interests of the moment. Gheorghiu-Dej insisted on the need for "an intensification of the political-organizational work for the transition of the working peasants with individual farms into the "great socialist farm."[68] Although the peasants were pleasantly surprised by liberalization, they did not jump upon opportunities to secure contracts with the state. Peasants saw a paradox in the fact that, while surplus production used to result in a *chiabur* classification, agricultural performance by the private farms was now encouraged—and by the same group whose drastic condemnation had previously resulted in tragic consequences for so many peasants.

The scrapping of the quota system was extensively covered by the Party press, which reproduced lengthy passages from Gheorghiu-Dej's speech, including praise for the benefits of Party activities in the villages. "There is no better propaganda and role model for collectivization than the prosperous and thriving GAC or the consolidated TOZ."[69] As noted above, 1957 was marked by the cessation of quotas and increases in taxes and administrative procedures for peasants not yet in collectives, with the purpose of forcing them through economic pressure to renounce their property and join the collective ranks. As discussed below, *chiabur* farms, particularly successful ones, had the highest tax burdens, followed by

non-*chiabur* farms and TOZs whose members had not eliminated the boundaries between their fields.

The August 2, 1957 Politburo meeting, which was not recorded, marked the enactment of these new measures to compel the peasants to register in the GACs. The decisions reached at that meeting were swiftly put into practice. First, Decree no. 379 established new levels of income tax for "uncollectivized peasants, the personal plots of the state farm and GAC farmers, the TOZ members and any private person with agricultural revenues." Private farmers were taxed more severely than collective farmers. For example, for monthly incomes of 600 to 750 lei, non-*chiabur* farms were taxed progressively from 30 lei plus 10 percent of an income over 600 lei, while for incomes between 2,500 and 5,000 lei the tax increased to 395 lei plus 32 percent of an income over 2,500 lei. For those households having a high income, between 10,000 and 15,000 lei, the tax was 3,245 lei and 50 percent of any income over 10,000 lei. For *chiabur* farms, income tax was calculated as above, but the law also established surcharges between 30 and 50 percent, depending on the monthly income reported. By contrast, collective farmers were tax-exempt for incomes earned from working for the collective farm. Collective farmers were also exempt for incomes earned from tilling their usufruct plots during the first year of collective farm membership and enjoyed a 50 percent tax cut during the second year. Finally, in case of natural disasters, GACs were tax-exempt proportional to the losses suffered.[70]

The measures that favored GACs over the private farms continued with the adoption of Decree no. 380 on August 6, 1957.[71] The decree stipulated that GACs and TOZs "in which peasants eliminated their borders and worked all land in common" were to be taxed 20 percent of their income. Other categories of TOZs fared worse, as they were taxed like private farms but with a 20 percent reduction. By the same decree, private farms were taxed an additional 10 percent for income from "sales on the market." This tax surcharge of 10 percent applied to private farms with taxable income between 2,001 and 5,000 lei. For private farms with taxable income over 5,000 lei, the tax surcharge was 20 percent. To crown this abuse, the regime violated its own constitution, which prohibited the retroactive application of the law. Decree no. 380 stipulated that taxation levels had retroactive effects on private farms and TOZs that had not dismantled boundaries between land plots for "socialist forms of agriculture" by January 1, 1958. Similarly, the decree continued the discriminatory measures to control free commerce that began with the scrapping of the quotas. Thus, Government Resolution no. 1226 of August 5, 1957 established that private farms could only sell with a government permit, at the risk of fines and confiscation of merchandise, no more than 200 kilograms (per person, per year) of wheat, corn or rye. If cereals were transported without a permit, the merchandise was confiscated and its owner fined.[72]

All these measures, which were rapidly put into practice, caused new anxiety in the villages. At the same time, activist brigades staged continual assaults to convince the peasants of the "benefits" of joining a collective, using the new tax

decrees that substantially favored cooperatives over those who stubbornly refused to surrender their own lands. Additionally, this administrative pressure was supplemented by chicanery and intimidation. The activists did not hesitate to appeal to the "state organs" of the police and Securitate. Thus, the fall of 1957 witnessed growing tension in most villages where peasants put up stubborn resistance to the final assault of collectivization. This tension was the buildup to fierce confrontations in 1958 and 1959 between the free peasantry, adamant in its resistance, and communist authorities, determined to achieve "the socialist transformation of agriculture" at any cost.

3.2. A page from the tragedy of collectivization: the price paid by the cities

The high price of collectivization was even paid by those in whose name it was carried out—the industrial working class. Party propaganda, which as usual hid any inconvenient realities, could not disguise the effects of the scrapping of the quota system: city residents lived in a state of endemic poverty. A secret document attached to Volume II of the minutes of the December 1957 plenary showed how severely the "socialist transformation of agriculture" affected the cities and how precarious the workers' food supply was. It is probable that, in the context of the Hungarian Revolution, the Party may have realized it was sitting on a powder keg; therefore it not only renounced quotas (a general sign of political relaxation in the majority of Eastern European states) but also raised industrial salaries by 30 percent.

The fact that the welfare of the industrial working class was far removed from its depiction in the daily *Scînteia* is demonstrated by a secret report of the government's General Statistics Division, which appointed a research team to look into the economic situation of 21 industrial working class families from Bucharest, Braşov, Timişoara, Giurgiu and Valea Jiului. The results of the survey reveal a picture entirely dissimilar to the *Scînteia* reporting:

> Most of the families surveyed lived on a diet that was nutritionally deficient, in large part consisting of vegetables. For example, crane operator Mazarache Constantin, an employee of "23 August" Steelworks, has three children aged 9, 11 and 12; his family lives mostly on potatoes and tomatoes. The Mazarache family can afford meat only once a week. Most families buy groceries once a day and have no food reserves. As the result of poor nutrition, many members of these families are in bad health. Constantin Mazarache's wife, for example, suffers from tuberculosis. All three children of Cobzan Maria, textile worker for Ada Marinescu Factories (Timişoara), are sick: two have tuberculosis and one has a heart condition.[73]

Many workers, such as Popa Gheorghe of the Lupeni mines, sent their children to their grandparents' farms in the hope that at least they would eat better:

> It was striking to meet this miner. Although he declared he was 28 years old, he looked to us at least 35 or 40, due to his small stature, emaciated body, and pale complexion. He was dressed in worn-out clothes and his only winter coat was the padded coat he used at work. Another worker we interviewed said he could afford to buy only a single pair of shoes in one year. Ironsmith Petronici Gheorghe from the "23 August" Steelworks has only his overalls to wear, no winter coat and no idea of when he could buy one. He had to give his only suit to his son so that the boy could enroll in high school. He had no firewood for the winter and no money to buy it. He lives with his two children in a dark, 12 square meter room with an earth floor. The inside of the room resembles a cellar.[74]

Ironically, the only positive thing noted by the commission was the fact that "most of the workers owned radios" through which these collateral victims of collectivization could listen daily to the news of the miraculous harvests on the collective farms.

The apparent liberalization of trade between village and city in the hybrid form of state control led to partial improvements in agricultural output. The state signed many purchase contracts with individual farmers, particularly for wheat. At the Central Committee's June 28–July 3, 1957 meeting, Moghioroş announced that purchase contracts provided 500,000 tons of cereal in only two months. Recognizing the virtual failure of the agrarian policies of the past, he made some comments that two or three years earlier would have gotten him arrested for right-wing deviation:

> The system of mandatory quotas interested neither the private nor the collectivized peasants. As a result, the amount of land planted with wheat has dropped considerably in the last five years… We had to send out all available activists to beat on peasants' doors and persuade them to go out and plant… Many peasants were unable to pay their taxes and we levied quotas on people who did not have even one seed. Maintaining this system one more day would have been dangerous for our state. If we are to take a serious look at agricultural output in the socialist sector, we see that despite an increase there, output was well behind that of the individual farm.[75]

Naturally, none of this appeared in the final resolution issued by the Central Committee. To the contrary, Point 14 of the resolution emphasized the need to "consolidate the GACs and TOZs systematically" while condemning "any tendency to infringe the principle of the free consent during collectivization campaigns."[76] Strangely, Gheorghiu-Dej did not say a word about collectivization during this meeting. The content of the official communication explained his silence: it spoke only of the release of Miron Constantinescu and Iosif Chişinevschi, two "factionalists" who stood in his way, from their functions. For Gheorghiu-Dej, as for all communist dictators, the problems of the society took second place to power struggles at the heart of the party.

3.3. Gheorghiu-Dej, 1958: "These people deserve to be beaten up really hard"

The year 1957 was characterized by the intensification of bureaucratic-administrative measures forcing peasants to give up their land. It ended with an escalation of rural tensions expressed in violent protests. In late November 1957, villagers from Şuraia and Vadu Roşca (Vrancea county) gathered and asked that their GAC petitions be destroyed because their signatures had been extorted by coercion.[77] Starting with this moment, the government turned to repressive methods, first as a preventive measure and then gradually achieving dimensions reminiscent of the early stage of collectivization in the Stalin years. People were arrested for any act of resistance—from petty criticism of agricultural policy to violent opposition.

Following the increase in tension in the villages, an entire series of secret changes to the Criminal Code and the Council of Ministers decisions gave the *Securitate*, the police and prosecutors' offices a much larger scope for action. Thus, by Decree no. 446 of September 21, 1957, the theft of grain from the field was punished with prison terms of up to 12 years and the confiscation of all property, while theft from private property was punished with prison terms of up to five years. Later, Decree no. 1 of January 1959 raised the maximum statutory punishment for "undermining the social order" to 25 years of confinement. In addition, if the crime was judged to pose a "serious danger," it received the death penalty. By a secret government resolution (HCM no. 237 of February 12, 1957), the practice of "house arrest" was revived for persons suspected of undermining "the people's democracy." By Decree no. 89 of the Presidency of the Great National Assembly, the doors of the labor camps were open again for persons who "endanger or attempt to endanger the state order, if these actions do not constitute crimes." The methodology for applying Decree no. 89 was detailed in secret Resolution no. 282 of the Council of Ministers, the final legislative piece of the refurbished repression machinery. It was specially designed to sustain action against the fires of revolt burning in the villages in response to collectivization pressures—the intensity of which had precedent only in the climactic year of 1950.[78] Even with all of these measures, revolt soon spread beyond the Galați region, reaching rural locales all over the country. Although the rioting was spontaneous and fragmented, tensions persisted in Romanian villages until the first months of 1962.

This tense atmosphere, and the waves of arrests in the rural areas, was rarely addressed during the meetings of a party leadership preoccupied with announcing with fanfare the success of collectivization. In an August 23, 1958 op-ed in *Pravda* entitled "Under the Banner of Socialism: Towards New Victories," Gheorghiu-Dej boasted that, in a single year, between July 1, 1957 and July 1, 1958, no fewer than 700,000 peasant families "joined the socialist sector," which now occupied more than 54 percent of the country's arable land."[79] This deliberate disregard of the abuses of collectivization was also clear in the plenary of November 26–28, 1958, where Gheorghiu-Dej triumphantly announced that 1,760,000 families were enrolled in 15,723 collective farms. While discussing tensions in rural areas, he was

cynical and merciless regarding the rebellious peasants: "Don't these people deserve to have their necks and backbones broken for perpetrating counter-revolutionary actions? These people deserve to be beaten up really hard. Have no pity on them, for they show no pity for our regime."[80] He showed more interest in potato fungus than in the fate of human beings: "Are the potatoes growing well this year? What is the situation with potato fungus? What percent of land is collectivized? How did you deal with the *chiaburi*?"[81]

Gheorghiu-Dej put enormous pressure on district leaders by constantly asking them to speed up the pace of collectivization, and to invite him to ceremonies marking its completion in their districts. In such an exchange between Gheorghiu-Dej and the Timişoara Party cadres, Bodnăraş evoked the repressive methods used by Ceauşescu in the Galați region: "Don't you wait for Ceauşescu to show up first to fix things!" Referring to the revolts, which he attributed to the *chiaburi*, Gheorghiu-Dej asserted "[W]e will not give up in the face of pressure from the *chiaburi*. If they don't mind their own business, it's no longer our fault."[82] Upon learning that a road and a bridge had not been finished in Galați, Gheorghiu-Dej interrupted with the same cynicism: "You have 3,600 *chiaburi* and you can't use them? Small wonder they got fat."[83] To preempt riots at meetings to found GACs, Gheorghiu-Dej advised that supporters of collectivization should be in the majority: "When we go to a meeting, we have to be absolutely sure that all the peasants are favorable to us and that we won't leave the meeting beaten up. It would be a major political failure. If there are only 10–20 of us, we may be at a disadvantage, but if we are in the majority, there is nothing they can do to us."

At the November 1958 Plenary, Gheorghiu-Dej formally expressed his disapproval of overt repression by asserting that "only comrade Ana Pauker intimidated peasants." However, Gheorghiu-Dej candidly admitted his doubt that "all peasants who raised their hands to establish a collective farm were convinced." As for the rioting in Galați, the Party leader did not hesitate to blame it on the local leadership: "What happened was an 'adventure.' We have nothing to do with this adventure because the regional Party Committee bypassed the Central Committee."

He was also cruel to other socio-professional classes, finding them guilty of instigation: "Never trust priests and merchants, not even when they are buried six feet under."[84] In addition to this language which, without a doubt, "energized" the violent character of this last stage of collectivization, Gheorghiu-Dej proposed concrete measures to weaken the peasants by increasing fiscal pressure. In his words:

> We loosened the screws a bit too much in our policy of limiting the *chiaburi*. This doesn't mean we should liquidate them, but nor should we pass near them and hear their sighs, because they've gotten fat and can hardly wait for the Americans to come.[85]

Even with the ferocity of the collectivization assault, certain areas in the mountains were spared by the legions of activists permeating the entire countryside. Gheorghiu-Dej cautioned that collectivization should not be attempted there, citing the embarrassing failure of the Bulgarian communists in such areas. He also warned against collectivization in extremely poor villages, exhibiting his usual communist lack of humanism: "it is better that peasants curse at their own poor individual farm than at the collective farm."[86] Clearly, what interested the communist leaders was not the well being of the villages but the ambition to "put into practice" Marxist-Leninist teachings, regardless of the cost. This was in fact the only rationale for collectivization, as for so many other measures taken in the communist years.

3.4. Intensified repression and the fall of the last pockets of peasant resistance

Despite cautionary remarks, the Party leadership was well aware that they could not afford to wait for the remaining 20 percent of Romania's peasants to freely consent to join the collective farms. Their reputations, both within the Party and outside of it, were at stake. Repression resumed shortly thereafter, eliminating the final holdouts and giving rise again to revolts that spread rapidly across the whole country, particularly in the regions of Galați, Craiova, and Argeş. Thus, when a squad of high-level bureaucrats, Nicolae Ceauşescu among them, came to support the cause of collectivization in a "sensitive" village, they ended up in a brawl and were chased away by angry peasants. Subsequently, the collectivization squad returned with police, personally directed by Ceauşescu, who did not hesitate to fire on the peasants himself.[87]

In the end, repression, coupled with intense propaganda, worked. The June 30–July 1, 1961 Central Committee Plenary recorded "success" in the field once again. Gheorghiu-Dej himself presented the report on the "socialist transformation of agriculture." For the Bucharest district, Secretary Gheorghe Nicula reported a 99 percent collectivization rate, a success he attributed to frequent district-level visits to collectivized villages: "We talked to every single peasant, one-on-one, about the results obtained by our GACs. We paid visits to top-ranking GACs with an active membership of over 100,000 peasants. Some of these became our best agitators." Of equal success was "the work carried out by our mobile cinemas with propaganda movies" portraying the "wealthy life" of collectivized peasants and their social progress.[88] Violence was used only in cases of mass rioting, based on the legal measures previously described, which accommodated a large scope of repressive action. It was preferable to manipulate the peasants with the aid of new propaganda techniques that were subtler than those in the past.

The plenary of 1961 illustrates the double talk used for "sensitive" circumstances. On one hand, participants at the meeting condemned infringements of free consent, notably in Argeş as well as earlier in Galați and Craiova, where violent rioting had erupted during the winter of that year. Many peasants from

these regions mailed complaints to the Central Committee, arguing that they were "forced" to sign GAC entry petitions. A subsequent report of the Central Control Commission "on the abuses and mistakes in collectivization work in the Argeş region" confirmed these abuses. For instance, 52,537 families were persuaded to join collective farms within a single year, representing "7,300 more families than during the past ten years combined." Regional authorities also reported the collectivization of many villages within a period of four or five days. "The village of Zănoaga, in the Drăgăneşti Olt district, was collectivized in a single night." This meant:

> They sent large teams of 20 to 30 activists to put pressure on the peasants. In addition to Party cadres, the teams included employees of various state enterprises and offices (accountants, tax collectors, tractor drivers, medical personnel, etc.), unprepared and unfamiliar with farming, former Iron Guard members, even non-Party members, and dubious elements who engaged in provocations, all of them unprepared, with no experience in agriculture.

Peasants were then summoned to the People's Council and fined if they did not appear. Subsequently, the fine was automatically transformed into seizure of family wagons and tools. Those who presented themselves were locked up in the school or in the People's Council building for a day and a night, and were made to read or listen to the model charter of the GAC repeatedly. At the same time, relatives (often one's children) having jobs in the cities were sent home, on unpaid leave, and told "not to return without proof that their families had joined the GAC." In many instances, reports mentioned that "some [activists] resorted to brutality, beating peasants who opposed them." As usual, the only reprisal against this form of abuse was to fire the local First Secretary.[89]

Blaming local Party activists as usual, the authorities managed to reestablish order in the first few months of 1961. Meanwhile, collectivization had progressed even in "sensitive" areas. In Galați, regional Party secretary Dulgheru reported a renewed commitment to finish collectivization by the spring of 1962 and to "learn from mistakes made in 1957." During a meeting with Dulgheru, Gheorghiu-Dej warned: "Keep in mind, we won't help you with the police again; we'll leave you in the hands of the peasants." The meeting had a much more relaxed tone than before, but left no doubt concerning the peasants' real feelings about collectivization. The meeting report was presented by Gheorghiu-Dej himself and published immediately in the Party press. It lacked any mention of rioting in Argeş and of the "criticism addressed to the regional leadership" during the meeting.[90]

Shortly after this meeting, brutal repression resumed, this time with the blessing of the highest ranks of the Party leadership. On September 20, 1961, Gheorghiu-Dej, Bodnăraş and Răutu visited Iaşi and explicitly recommended combining propaganda with persuasion. One can conjecture that this strategy, which had been denounced by the leadership several months earlier, was a consequence

of criticism Gheorghiu-Dej received for the slow pace of collectivization during his visit in the Soviet Union between July 31 and August 12. Although no clear evidence has been identified so far in Romanian archives to substantiate this conjecture, the resumption of force in collectivization, in spite of the prior declarations, is a sign of how things stood. The language Gheorghiu-Dej used before local cadres in September 1961 was far crueler than anything heard in his 1958 speech. He outlined two main fronts of action:

> You have to step up your involvement. You have to knock on every door and focus on those who block our way, whether as individuals or as groups. If you encounter backward people, tell them they're struggling against their own interests. Of course there are difficulties, but let us not be bowed. It is possible that here and there people will complain that they were beaten up, but we have to get people on the road to collective farming.

In Iaşi, where 92 percent of peasants were collectivized, the Party could not prevent the last 8 percent from refusing to enter the collectives. In these circumstances, Gheorghiu-Dej offered a proposal that defined the entire philosophy of collectivization: "*People must be told they won't escape the collective farm just as they won't escape death*" [author's emphasis].[91] Gheorghiu-Dej's anger was not without cause. By September 1, 1961, the socialist sector in Romania had 82.8 percent of all arable land, with GACs owning 66.6 percent. Those who continued their opposition had to be compelled by any means to give up their land and enter the collectives—otherwise there could be no official announcement report that the collectivization campaign was completed.[92]

4. EPILOGUE: A CLOCK AND A RADIO FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ROMANIAN VILLAGE

Between December 18 and December 22, 1961, the Party held the Conference of Collective Farmers in Bucharest. The occasion was to celebrate the completion of collectivization. (In order to avoid what happened in Bulgaria, the Party eventually exempted hill and mountain regions from collectivization.) The Conference was pure propaganda. Collectivized farmers from every corner of Romania gave speeches in which they raved about the "bliss" peasants experienced after joining the collective farm.

For example, Dumitru Tudose, the chairman of the GAC in Stoicăneşti, Argeş, stated the following in his speech: "Our collectivized farmers now live better, eat better and are better clothed than before. For all that we have achieved so far and for all that we will achieve in the future we thank the Party from the bottom of our hearts, for it is the Party that led us on the road to wealth."

Simon Pustai, a milker employed by GAC "6 March" from Câlnic (Sebeş district, Hunedoara region) described his happiness in the following words: "As the

result of my work in the GAC, I built a home, purchased a sewing machine, washer, and bicycle, and during a regional competition, I was awarded a clock and a radio."[93]

Pustai's story cogently summarizes what the benefits of collectivization were in the end. Its costs were considerably greater—we refer only to the official report at that time, and not to the price the country paid for the entire experiment.

In a 1962 report to the Central Committee, Paul Niculescu-Mizil showed that the story of Pustai's radio set was published as propaganda material in over 200,000 leaflets. Gheorghiu-Dej's speech at the same conference was also published in 170,000 leaflets, and 200,000 posters were printed. In 1961 alone, 4.5 million copies of 23 different brochures were published in a collection called "Little Library of Agriculture." That same year, four million copies of 80 different posters about collectivization were printed. The propaganda effort in 1961 produced approximately 150 books (900,000 copies) on the experience of successful GACs, which were complemented by 5,150,000 propaganda photos.

Local newspapers and trained reporters covered collectivization issues in all regions. The daily *Scînteia*, for instance, had 149 reporters around the country. Successful collective farmers appeared on 250 radio and television shows, such as "Among Good Neighbors," "New Collective Farms" and "The Collectivists' Tribune." In 1961, the General Division of Cinematography produced 17 cinema documentaries, available for mobile cinemas in 800 reel copies and viewed by 1.3 million people. Between December 1, 1961 and February 28, 1962, the government paid for 140 mobile cinemas to be sent into the countryside during the Village Film Festival. 4.5 million brochures were distributed at numerous agriculture-related sessions and workshops on collectivization. The costs of this propaganda operation were enormous.

On April 16, 1962, *Pravda* ran a special report entitled "The Right Policy Prevails in All Socialist Countries":

> Romania witnessed this spring an event that fills with joy the hearts of the working class in this country and of their friends abroad: Romania completed the collectivization of agriculture. The process ended three years earlier than the deadline set by the Third Party Congress. The basic policy in the peasant movement was the strict observance of the Leninist principle of the free consent.[94]

We return to the period only two years prior to this article. On June 25, 1959, a report (C/4405) was presented concerning "the situation of the counterrevolutionary elements in Romania, imprisoned as punishment or while being investigated by the Securitate." It was signed by Interior Minister Alexandru Drăghici and destined for the Party leadership. The report showed that, as of that date, 13,957 people were condemned or in prison. Of these, 908 were sentenced to hard labor, 403 were placed under house arrest and 2,400 were under investigation.

Many of them (4,928) were peasants. Proving that resistance to collectivization came from both villages and cities, 8,195 had been arrested for "agitating and plotting against social order and the socialist transformation of agriculture."[95] No statistics can possibly represent the deaths, the suffering and the thousands of years collectively spent in prisons and work camps by peasants who wanted only to live out their own small destiny, and not the regime's monstrous fantasies. Nor can numbers show the long-term effects of the destruction of Romanian agriculture.

Once collectivization was declared to be complete, the communist bureaucracy busied itself with organizing the festivities to celebrate this momentous occasion. The Department of the Affairs of the Central Committee of the RWP prepared the Extraordinary Session of the Grand National Assembly, which would take place on April 27–30, 1962, and at which the conclusion of the "socialist transformation of agriculture" would be announced. On April 21, 1962, the department sent the following instruction to those invited from around the country:

> All GAC chairmen and ordinary GAC members, including Grand National Assembly representatives, are required to join the proceedings dressed in folk costumes. The trains commissioned to take them to Bucharest shall be decorated with national and communist flags, with the People's Republic of Romania insignia, fir tree branches, and the following slogans: *Long live the RWP, the people's tried and true leader, inspirer and organizer of our victories! Success to the proceedings of the Grand National Assembly meeting dedicated to achieving full collectivization in the People's Republic of Romania! Long live the alliance between the working class and the collectivized peasants, the solid rock of our people's democracy*.[96]

Next to the radio won by Simion Pustai, the famous milker from Câlnic, his wife and relatives waited in vain to hear him speak. Pustai had been invited to the great solemnities, but he was not on the program. His role had ended: Romanian villages were already populated by alarm clocks that woke the collective farmers at dawn for their daily toil…

Translated from Romanian by Cornel Ban and Linda Miller

NOTES

Acknowledgments: It is fitting here to thank the personnel of the Central National Historical Archives of Romania for giving me the chance to consult these documents in the reading room of that institution. With few exceptions, their solicitude toward me, and especially that of the Director Corneliu Lungu, was remarkable and deserves reward at least in the form of these lines. At the same time, I express my warm gratitude to my friend and colleague Nicolae Videnie, who helped me with advice and even by identifying and obtaining some of the documents, throughout the duration of this project.

1 Speech by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, in *Articole şi cuvântări*, 4th ed., (Bucharest: Editura de Stat pentru Literatură Politică, 1956) (hereafter referred to as *Articole şi cuvântări*), 623–666.
2 The model charter was adopted by the government in Resolution no. 1650 of June 18, 1953. The charter was published in Gheorghe Iancu, Virgiliu Ţârău and Ottomar Traşcă, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Aspecte legislative, 1945–1962* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000), 262–275, (hereafter referred to as Iancu et al., eds., *Colectivizarea*).
3 "Hotărârea Plenarei lărgite a CC al PMR din 19–20 august 1953, cu privire la îmbunătăţirea muncii de partid şi întărirea legăturii cu masele, 1953," 24–26.
4 Ghiţă Ionescu, *Comunismul în România* (Bucharest: Litera, 1994), 253.
5 ASRI, collection "D", file 7778, vol. 27, 10. Because this paper only used this collection from the ASRI, I will hereafter refer only to the number of the file, volume and pages.
6 Iancu et al., eds., *Colectivizarea*, 280.
7 Iancu et al., eds., *Colectivizarea,* 280–281 (Resolution no. 3007).
8 Iancu et al., eds., *Colectivizarea*, 281–285.
9 *Articole şi cuvântări*, (1956), 637.
10 Iancu et al., eds., *Colectivizarea*, 286–287.
11 Iancu et al., eds., *Colectivizarea*, 289.
12 Iancu et al., eds., *Colectivizarea*, 293–299.
13 ANIC, fond "CC al PCR-Cancelarie," file 14/1954, "Stenograma şedinţei din 28 ianuarie 1954," 2. Because this paper only used this collection from ANIC, I will hereafter refer only to the number of the file and type of document.
14 ANIC, file 14/1954, 3–4.
15 Editors' note: The system of ration cards for food was first introduced in various European countries during World War I. In the Soviet Union, this system was made quasi-permanent, becoming a daily reality in peacetime as well. In Romania the system was temporarily introduced during World War II, and then on a larger scale after the communist take-over, following the Soviet model. Abandoned after the economic consolidation of the communist regime, ration cards were reintroduced in the 1980s as part of the Ceauşescu regime's strategy of reducing public consumption in order to repay Romania's large foreign debt.
16 *Articole şi cuvântări* (1956), 763–798.
17 ANIC, file 64/1954, "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic cu privire la agricultura României."
18 Octavian Roske, "Colectivizarea agriculturii în România, 1949–1962," *Arhivele Totalitarismului,* I (1993) 1, 146–168.
19 ANIC, file 43/1955, "Protocolul Secretariatului CC al PMR, iunie 1955, aplicarea în Constanţa a Hotărârii Biroului Politic al PMR din 8 noiembrie 1954 privind revizuirea listelor de chiaburi," 6.
20 ANIC, file 43/1955, 10.
21 ANIC, file 43/1955, 1.
22 ASRI, file 4648, 336.
23 August 23 was the national holiday of communist Romania, commemorating the military insurrection of 23 August 1944 by means of which the Romanian army joined the Allied Powers against Nazi Germany.
24 *Articole şi cuvântări*, (1956), 841.
25 Iancu et al., eds., *Colectivizarea*, 345–346.

26 Ionescu, *Comunismul*, 286.
27 *Articole şi cuvântări*, 1960, 87–109.
28 *Articole şi cuvântări*, 1960, 89, 109.
29 ANIC, file 1/1956, "Stenograma şedinţei cu privire la organizarea Ministerului Agriculturii," 12–13.
30 ANIC, file 5/1956, "Protocolul şi stenograma şedinţei Biroului Politic al CC al PMR din 10 ianuarie 1956," 5–6.
31 ANIC, file 5/1956, 6.
32 ANIC, file 5/1956, 54–55.
33 ANIC, file 5/1956, 6–11.
34 ANIC, file 5/1956, 13, 26.
35 ANIC, file 5/1956, 21.
36 ANIC, file 5/1956, 24–27.
37 ANIC, file 5/1956, 30.
38 ANIC, file 5/1956, 36.
39 ANIC, file 5/1956, 44.
40 ANIC, file 13/1956, "Protocol nr. 6 al şedinţei Secretariatului CC al PMR din 4 februarie 1956," 6.
41 ANIC, file 13/1956, 7–10.
42 ANIC, file 5/1956, 37.
43 ANIC, file 62/1956, "Protocol nr. 25 al şedinţei Secretariatului CC din 11 iunie 1956," 1–2.
44 *Articole şi cuvântări*, 1960, 96.
45 ANIC, file 62/1956, 5.
46 ANIC, file 62/1956, 6–7.
47 ANIC, file 62/1956, 8–11.
48 ANIC, file 62/1956, 12–13.
49 ANIC, file 62/1956, 14–15.
50 ANIC, file 62/1956, 17.
51 ANIC, file 62/1956, 17–18.
52 ANIC, file 62/1956, 56–63.
53 ANIC, file 62/1956, 59.
54 ANIC, file 68/1956, 27. "Stenograma şedintei de la CC al PMR cu prim-secretarii regionalelor de partid, şefii secţiilor CC şi unii şefi de ministere privind 'măsuri pentru pregătirea recoltării, 22 iunie 1956,'" 27.
55 ANIC, file 62/1956, 61.
56 ANIC, file 62/1956, 56.
57 ANIC, file 62/1956, 1–2.
58 Roske, "Colectivizarea agriculturii în România, 1949–1962," 146–168.
59 ANIC, file 80/1956, "Protocol nr. 31 al şedinţei Biroului Politic al CC al PMR din 27 iulie 1956," 3–5.
60 ANIC, file 97/1956, 2–3.
61 ANIC, file 106/1956, "Protocol nr. 43 al şedinţei Biroului Politic din 20 septembrie 1956."
62 *Articole şi cuvântări*, 1959, 231.
63 ANIC, file 139/1956, vol. I, "Stenograma Plenarei CC al PMR din 27–29 decembrie, 1956."
64 ANIC, file 139/1956, vol. I, 83. See Mateescu Constantin's speech.
65 ANIC, file 139/1956, vol. I, 175.

66 ANIC, file 139/1956, vol. II, 142.
67 ANIC, file 139/1956, vol. I, 227.
68 ANIC, file 139/1956, vol. I, 241–242, 247–248.
69 *Scînteia*, no. 3791, December 30, 1956.
70 ANIC, file 37/1957, 6–16.
71 ANIC, file 37/1957, 17–24.
72 ANIC, file 37/1957, 25–30.
73 ANIC, file 139/1956, vol. II, 164–166.
74 ANIC, file 139/1956, vol. II, 164–166.
75 ANIC, file 28/1957, 237. "Şedinţa CC al PMR, 28 iunie–3 iulie, 1957."
76 ANIC, file 28/1957, 358.
77 See the chapter by Stoica in this volume.
78 Marius Oprea, "Legile represiunii," in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek and Jean-Louis Margolin, *Cartea neagră a comunismului. Crime, teroare, represiune* (Bucharest: Humanitas, Fundaţia Academia Civică, 1998), 752–755.
79 *Articole şi cuvântări*, 1959, 503–509.
80 ANIC, file 30/1958, "Stenograma Plenarei CC al PMR din 26–28 noiembrie, 1958," vol. 1, 23.
81 ANIC, file 30/1958, 47–50.
82 ANIC, file 30/1958, 63.
83 ANIC, file 30/1958, 71.
84 ANIC, file 30/1958, 100–103.
85 ANIC, file 30/1958, 190.
86 ANIC, file 30/1958, 50.
87 Gheorghe Apostol, *Eu şi Gheorghiu-Dej*, 141. Apostol claims that Gheorghiu-Dej wanted to use the opportunity to demote Ceauşescu, who was defended by Pârvulescu and Drăghici. The two defenders claimed Ceauşescu shot in self-defense. The claim made by Apostol is questionable, as Ceauşescu was a leading figure of collectivization, as shown in the minutes of RWP meetings.
88 ANIC, file 32/1961, "Stenograma Plenarei din 30 iunie–1 iulie 1961," 139.
89 ANIC, file 75/1961, "Raport al Comisiei Centrale de Revizie din 28 noiembrie 1961," 72–75.
90 ANIC, file 75/1961, 184.
91 ANIC, file 40/1961, "Stenograma discuţiilor de la Sfatul Popular al regiunii Iaşi, 20 septembrie 1961," 3–5, 33.
92 ANIC, file 40/1961, "Stenograma discuţiilor de la Sfatul Popular al regiunii Iaşi, 20 septembrie 1961," 3–5, 33.
93 ANIC, file 60/1961, "Stenograma Conferinţei ţăranilor colectivişti din 18–22 decembrie 1961, prezidată de Alexandru Moghioroş," 73–74, 126.
94 ANIC, file 39/1962, 24/03/1962, "Informaţie (secţia de propagandă şi agitaţie a CC)," 49–54, 104.
95 ASRI, file 7778, vol. 3, 163–166. We assume that these figures underestimate the true numbers imprisoned.
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Hotărârea Plenarei lărgite a CC al PMR din 19–20 august 1953, cu privire la îmbunătăţirea muncii de partid şi întărirea legăturii cu masele [The resolution of the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party of 19-20 August 1953 concerning the improvement of party activity and the consolidation of relations with the masses]. s.p. 1953.

Law and Propaganda: Rural Land Ownership, Collectivization and Socialist Property in Romania

LINDA MILLER

> "As is well known, in both law and propaganda, collective farms were based on the idea that the peasants had freely pooled their land and other agricultural resources. Peasants retained legal title to their land and, through the General Assembly, exerted democratic control over the farm's activities."
>
> Andrew Cartwright, "Reconstructing the Past in the Village: Land Reforms in Transylvania 1990–1991," in George Cipăianu and Virgiliu Țârău, eds. *Romanian and British Historians on the Contemporary History of Romania* (Cluj Napoca: University Press, 2000), 168.

The other studies in this book, as well as in post-communist academic literature, amply illustrate the realities of collectivization of agriculture in Romania in the period from 1949–1962: confiscatory taxation of private peasants; mandatory agricultural quotas; prosecution and destruction of those designated as "rich peasants"; violence and coerced membership in collective farms.[1] In the face of this apparent state-sponsored lawlessness, any analysis of peasant property rights and the legal mechanism for the transfer of land to the collectives seems almost irrelevant. Nevertheless, the question of ownership of the land farmed by the collectives, and how such ownership was acquired, has continuing implications for the post-1989 period and has been the subject of some confusion. Much of the confusion has its roots in the utilization of a range of cooperative forms over the time period discussed in this book (1949–1962), all generally designated as "agricultural production cooperatives" (*Cooperative Agricole de Producție*, or CAP's), with different legal provisions allowing peasant participation either with or without the transfer of land title to the collective.[2] This technique was used to maximize the apparent success of the collectivization effort. It is only after the official "closing" of the collectivization effort in 1962 that this range of permissible forms was reduced to a single form, also called a CAP, in which transfer of the member's land was a requirement of membership in the collective.

Additionally, and not unexpectedly, some of the confusion derives from the divergence of the propaganda idea of the "free consent of the peasants" (as it was reflected in the legal form of cooperatives) from reality. Finally, some of the confusion results from the incorporation of the ideas of socialist propaganda into the

heart of Romania's civil law system, while at the same time pre-communist forms of juridical persons and their property ownership were retained, reflecting the influence within law of the "idea" presented by propaganda.

In addition, the studies in this book address certain themes pertaining to the "making of property" and the question of how new property forms and property relations were made. In this respect, this study looks at three primary issues:

1. The property rights of peasants during the pre-collectivization period, and the degree to which the laws governing their ownership of land was affected by national policies protecting higher social interests to the detriment of full private property rights;
2. The law during this period (and the short period thereafter necessary to describe the completion of the legal framework for collectives) with respect to the transfer of land to the collectives by the mechanism of peasant membership, as well as the degree to which elements of pre-Communist law and practices were utilized in the collectivization process;
3. The propagandization of law through the idea of socialist property applied to legal structures which retained attributes of past private property forms.

For the most part, the source material for this work is laws, decrees, regulations, ministerial orders and other sources of law within the Romanian legal system (hereafter the "Law"), and the legal treatises and other academic writings that, in Romania as a civil law country, have a great influence on legal thinking. In this case, among other sources, the journal of the Union of Jurists in Romania, *Justiția Nouă* [New Justice], for the years 1949–1962 has provided ongoing contemporaneous analysis of the issues of collectivization addressed by Romanian legal scholars of the period. The limited number of court cases discussed here is based on a review of the "Judicial Practice" section of each issue, containing cases considered worthy of note by the journal's staff. They are used only for illustrative purposes. As noted, this study does not end in 1962 (as is the case with the other studies in this volume) but in 1966, after changes in the Romanian Constitution and Law in the 1965–1966 period eliminated early forms of cooperative organizations in which peasant members were able to retain their rights to their land.[3]

It should be mentioned at the outset that the approach taken in this study has obvious inherent limitations, particularly with respect to the real implementation of the Law. Unsurprisingly, legal scholars of the period presented the "idea" of collectivization: cooperative organizations established through the good will and free association of the peasants, with the general assembly as a democratic device allowing peasants control over the activities of the collectives, and a share of the fruits of collective resources and labor. Real life is for the other studies in this book.

Space limitations and consideration for an audience composed primarily of non-lawyers has resulted in far more general descriptions of Law than would be found in a legal treatise and the inevitable omission of detail necessary for tech-

nical completeness. Additionally, some portions of the Law as it relates to the methods by which land was taken through expropriation or confiscation are discussed only briefly. This is not intended as a complete or detailed discussion of all the legal provisions utilized by the communist state to strip individuals of property. The primary focus here are the narrower questions of ownership of the land obtained by the collectives through the membership process, peasant rights relating to land and the role of cooperative organizations and their property in the Romanian legal system.

1. PROPERTY RIGHTS OF PEASANTS IN THE PRE-COLLECTIVIZATION PERIOD

The Communist Law on property developed within a context established by Romania's pre-existing legal system. Commencing with the adoption of the Romanian Civil Code of 1864 (hereafter the "Code"), and continuing through the Communist period, Romanian legal scholars viewed property rights within classifications provided by the Code covering goods or assets and provisions for property. Such classification includes the division into "movables" and "immovables," with land as the only thing that is immovable by nature.[4] The right of property, the most complete of a number of rights in goods[5] (such as the rights conveyed in a lease) was characterized in Article 480 of the Code: "Property is the right that someone has to enjoy and dispose of a thing exclusively and absolutely, within the limits determined by law."[6] The elements are often described as: (1) the right to use, (2) the right to collect the fruits thereof and (3) the right to dispose.[7]

Of these, the right of disposition is considered the essential element of the right of property. One legal scholar, writing during the Communist period, argued "that which distinguishes the owner of property from the other possessors of a property rights [such as a tenant] is the possibility of disposing of the good that forms the object of the property; the other possessors of real property rights could have only the capacity to use, to collect the fruits and to hold a thing."[8] Eminent legal scholars during the interwar period were even more direct: "The principal attribute of property is the right to dispose that is the right to alienate or even destroy."[9]

Property rights were also defined, by the owner, as (1) within the state domain, either (a) public, serving the public use, or (b) private, owned by the state but not in public use; or (2) belonging to a private party.[10] The concept of "private" as it relates either to property of the State or of other parties is distinguished by the characteristic of participation in the "civil circuit"[11] that includes all goods that can be acquired, preserved, administered or alienated by acts within the civil law. In contrast, property in the public domain has inalienability as its fundamental characteristic. Property cannot be transferred from the public domain.

Beginning in the nineteenth century,[12] Romanian legislation provided that the right of property could be restricted by law. Peasant ownership of land, regulated by the Code; by the Rural Law of 1864 and subsequent agricultural reform legis-

lation; and by the Romanian Constitution was a specific case of restricted rights. Although the land was not part of the public domain, and successive agrarian reform measures were designed and publicly promoted as transfers of land into peasant hands, alienation was restricted to the extent that legal scholars of the interwar period referred to the ownership as "inalienable." Professor Andrei Rădulescu explained the situation as follows: "In the general interest sometimes the alienation of a good is prohibited completely; for example, goods in the public domain of the State, the districts, or the communes. We say that national highways cannot be alienated. Or, that an alienation of this nature is void… But also for private wealth, there exist the same restrictions. You know that happened in 1864, when the grant to the peasants of the property which they worked took place. This land, called typically, but unsuitably, rural land, was declared by the 1864 law and the laws which further developed its principles, inalienable."[13]

In a similar fashion, the scholars Hamangiu, Rosetti and Băicoianu discussed the rapid evolution of legislation restricting the "absolute" character of private property, stating that "today [1926], property in general and particularly land, has lost a good part of its individual character and has acquired an obvious social character."[14] Noting that the general rule for private goods is alienability, and that only goods that make up a part of the public domain are inalienable, they go on to state that inalienability decreed directly by law is "rare," citing the various agrarian laws affecting rural land, nontransferable train tickets and the like and historical monuments.[15] And, although the vehicle for the transformation of private property into the public domain was the mechanism of "expropriation" by which compensation was to be paid for the taking of private property, successive decades of legal restrictions on the transfer of peasant property were imposed with no compensation.[16]

The foundation for peasant land ownership, the Law for the Regulation of Rural Property of 1864 (the "Rural Law") provided for peasants subject to labor servitude, or "*clăcaşi*," to "be and remain full proprietors of the lots in their possession."[17] Each peasant receiving land had to pay for the redemption of his labor and other obligations over a period of fifteen years.[18]

For a period of thirty years from the date of the promulgation of the Rural Law (August 15, 1864), peasants and their heirs could not alienate or mortgage the land except to the commune or another villager meeting certain requirements.[19] Romanian jurisprudence dealt at length with the restrictions on alienation of the Rural Law and later legislation (discussed below), finding transactions null and void where the buyer did not meet the legal requirements, such as the case of a priest, the son of a peasant, who as one who was not a village cultivator of land did not have the capacity to purchase land.[20]

Restrictions on peasant property rights were also contained in the 1866 Constitution. Constitutional modifications in 1884 extended the period of the inalienability of the land for the former *clăcaşi* for an additional 32 years and imposed the restriction on those who had bought small lots from the State.[21] The Constitutional restrictions expired in 1916 and were not renewed in the 1923 Con-

stitution. The reason given for this was that the inalienability of rural land was regulated in the Agricultural Law of July 1921, and no longer needed to be resolved by the Constitution."[22] Other laws extending restrictions on the alienability of rural land included the Agrarian Reform Law of the Old Kingdom,[23] which provided for not only restrictions on sale but also State rights of pre-emptive purchase, as well limitations on the division of property through succession; the Law on the Alienation of Lots Acquired through Land Grant of March 13, 1925,[24] which extended to peasants in the entire country restrictions on the alienation of land (including the State pre-emptive rights) acquired on the basis of agrarian reform laws; and the Law on the Alienation of the Goods of the State or through purchase from the Rural Bank (*Casa Rurală*) and required the prior approval of the Agricultural Counselor for the District; Law no. 67 On the Organization and Encouragement of Agriculture of March 19, 1937,[25] which expanded previous requirements for buyers as Romanian citizens, cultivators of land or graduates of agriculture schools. These requirements included that the buyer's family not own more than 50 ha of land; that the fulfillment of each such requirement must be contained in a separate document (an administrative burden); that inheritors of land must also meet such requirements as well as requirements with respect to maintenance of minimum size; that the State must have not exercised its preemptive rights; and that the neighbors be accorded purchase rights where price and other considerations were equal.[26]

The effect of these rules was the elimination of any functioning free market for the sale of rural land, an objective that was consistent with, and continued in expanded fashion by (1) Law no. 151 for the Achievement of Agricultural Reform of 1945,[27] which provided simply that all households created under the Law (other households receiving land still being covered by the 1937 Law)[28] could not be divided, sold, leased or mortgaged, with exceptional cases receiving the consent of the Minister of Agriculture and State Domain; and (2) Law no. 203 of June 21, 1947 (later modified), for the Regulation of the Circulation and Establishment of the Legal System for Agricultural Real Estate, that is, not only land but also buildings,[29] extending the scope of the restrictions to all land outside of village borders, regardless of extent, in rural communes, maintaining the requirement that authorization be required for the acquisition of real estate and that the State's preemptive right be respected, continuing and expanding the limitations on purchasers.[30]

The relationship between the two laws, and an implicit acknowledgement of the comparability of their effect, is found in the Treatise of Agricultural Cooperative Law. Authors Salvator Brădeanu and Lucian Stângu[31] refer to the 1937 Law as provided for a system determined by the interest of the "then dominant classes," whereas they describe Law 203/1947 as having the "significance of transposing, upon the plan of judicial regulation, the policies promoted by the Party of helping the working peasant."[32] Minus the rhetoric, a peasant could not freely sell, mortgage or transfer through succession any rural land acquired under the auspices of the Romanian State in 1937; and no private person at all could freely sell, mortgage or transfer through succession any rural land in 1947.

Nor, starting in 1947, could anyone challenge any actions taken under the Agrarian Reform Law of 1945 in court, because Law no. 177 of June 7, 1947 for the Interpretation of the Legal Dispositions concerning the Achievement of Agrarian Reform, provided that "the actions taken for the achievement of agrarian reform and their regulations and completing decisions of the Minister of Agriculture and Domain are acts of the government and cannot be attacked in court.[33] In this respect, the concept of restricting the powers of the judiciary to review acts of government had been introduced into Romanian law in the early 20th century and enshrined in the 1923 Constitution on the basis that political decisions could not be challenged in court.[34] Although the implementation of the agrarian laws had not previously been beyond the scope of judicial review, even cases in progress were halted by Law no. 177/1947. An attack upon the expropriation of an estate in Suceava in which the daughter of a landlord claimed that she herself was entitled to 50 ha of the estate was rejected as inadmissible under Law no. 177. She had appealed an earlier decision in which the Central Committee for Agrarian Reform had actually analyzed her documents and concluded that they were insufficient under the law.[35]

2. PROPERTY RIGHTS OF PEASANTS DURING THE COLLECTIVIZATION PERIOD

As discussed above, a critical step in the foundation for collectivization, the elimination of a free market in the sale of rural land, accomplished in 1947, was facilitated by the earlier legislation governing rural land. Other elements of the law of collectivization also had precursors in the prior legal system. The other studies in this collection present, in abundant detail, the hallmarks of collectivization: high levels of violence and coercion, overweening state control and elaborate propaganda. However, in the Constitution of April 13, 1948, described by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej[36] as a "Soviet-type" constitution, propaganda had not yet fully modified the law. It provided variously that "the means of production belong to the State as the goods of the entire people or to cooperative organizations or *to private persons, physical or legal*" [emphasis provided] (Art. 5), while "private property and the rights of inheritance are recognized and guaranteed through law" (Art. 8) and that the "land belongs to those who work it"… the State "encourages and supports village cooperation" (Art. 9).[37] It was not until the 1952 Constitution that socialist property over the means of production was defined as having the form of "property of the State (common good of the people)" or the "form of cooperative collective property (property of the agricultural collective farms or of cooperative organizations)" (Art. 6).[38] Moreover, it was not until 1965 that the constitution specified that "the land of the agricultural cooperatives of production, the animals, the tools, the installations and the constructions to which they belong are cooperative property" (Art. 9).[39]

Notwithstanding the role of the Soviet Union and its army in Romania's development of a socialist state (including Soviet models for the Romanian Constitu-

tions of 1948 and 1952, and for collectivized agriculture),[40] Romania's collectivization commenced on a far different legal footing than that of the Soviet Union because there was no state nationalization of all the land.[41] The report presented to the Central Committee by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej provided the outline for the treatment of peasant property: poor and middle peasants were to be convinced of the necessity of gradual union in agricultural collective farms. Therefore, the collective farms would be assured that they would be able to use all lands belonging to the farms forever. Thus, the problem of the transfer of the land into public property, the problem of the social transformation of the village, would be solved. Even as the report recognized that the construction of socialism could only be accomplished on the basis of the transfer of the means of production into public property, it indicates that "…the issue of the nationalizing of the land at this moment, in the conditions of our country, is not immediate."[42]

The plan outlined in the report called for the creation of a limited number of collective agricultural farms (GAC). Their organization would be governed by model form of founding document ("Model Charter"), which would provide for the members to bring the land they possessed into the collective, with the right to keep a small piece of land for the use of their family next to their house.[43] However, this did not mean that no concrete steps had been taken to extend state ownership of land. Two days earlier, on March 1, 1949, the Minister of Agriculture issued Decree no. 83, "For the Completion of Provisions under Law no. 187 of 1945," with the stated purpose of impeding the "sabotage of the planting plan and agricultural production" (Art. 1).[44] The Decree provided for State ownership of land previously exempted from expropriation, specifically the 50 ha which the Agrarian Reform Law itself had left to the owners and model farms.[45] Gheorghiu-Dej referred to the activity of the villages' party organizations and their active role in applying the recent decree on the confiscation of the land still remaining in the control of the rich landowners. Since Law no. 177 of 1947 had removed the actions of the Minister of Agriculture in implementing the Agrarian Reform Law from the scope of judicial review, there could be no court challenges as to the authority of the Minister to actually modify the provisions of the law to extend the scope of expropriation in this way.

In addition to the commentary about nationalization of land in the Gheorghiu-Dej report, the discussion of the members of the Central Committee also addressed the question of nationalization. Miron Constantinescu noted that, although this is a principal question of Marx and Lenin, "they indicate at the same time that the nationalization of the land is not in itself a socialist measure."[46] Rather than nationalization of the land, the focus of the discussion shifted to the elimination of the landlords as a class, with C. Doncea noting: "We did not liquidate the landlords as a class in March, 1945 but now, on March 2, 1949."[47]

Just as it was concluded that nationalization was not required for collectivization in Romania, so was the idea accepted that the chosen road to socialist agriculture used cooperative organizations, in spite of the role of agricultural cooperative organizations in the bourgeois past. One of the challenges of the collectiv-

ization effort was to avoid confusion between "old" cooperative practices and the "our" cooperative activity. Vasile Luca spoke of cooperative organizations that had been occupied with the old form of collecting the obligatory quotas to the State. Cooperatives must be organized on "new bases."[48] Gheorghiu-Dej indicated that "there must be a law of reorganization on the basis of which is organized the whole cooperation and the charter corresponding to the missions which we have to give our cooperation."[49]

3. THE PLACE OF SOCIALIST PROPERTY IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM OF SOCIALIST ROMANIA

Legal scholars had already been preparing the ground conceptually for the transformation of cooperative organizations into instruments of socialist development even before the Plenary acted. In November 1948, *Justiția Nouă* published an article by Marcel Fischler entitled "The Evolution of Cooperative Legislation in Romania in Light of Class Interests." Fischler maintained that the new Constitution inaugurated a new era in the history of Romanian cooperatives, with legislation having the interests of the workers, working peasants and all working people in the villages and cities as its foundation.[50] He indicated that the situation was "totally different in the past," discussing the rural associations as they first appeared in 1893, and the numerous cooperative laws of past years: 1903, 1905, 1908, 1910 and 1919.[51]

Within a month of the March 3–5 Central Committee Plenary Session, on April 2, 1949, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers issued Decree no. 133 "For the Organization of Cooperation," the basic legislation during the Communist period for cooperative organizations. The Decree established a number of categories of cooperatives, one of which was the agricultural production cooperative (CAP). Within this category are listed (1) agricultural collective households (GAC) and (2) other types of associations (Art. 2). Thus, a whole range of organizations for agricultural cooperation fell within this classification as long as they met the conditions required by the decree: the approval of a constitutive act and adoption of a charter by the general assembly, legalization of signatures of the associates, the approval by the Union of Cooperatives, and registration in the register of cooperatives (Art. 7). These cooperatives have the same general legal form and structure as those in the pre-Communist period: authenticated constitutive act and charter, associates who act through a general assembly, and filing with the cooperative register. And, in fact, Decree no. 133 (Art. 29) provides specifically that "the Law for the Organization of Cooperation of 1935… is and remains abrogated." As indicated above, there was no attempt to present the cooperatives as a new socialist form. Rather, the cooperative organization (and indeed juridical person itself) having been previously misused for bourgeois purposes, was now transformed into an instrument for achieving socialism. One legal writer, reviewing the capitalist past of cooperative organizations, concluded that "In our popular dem-

ocratic regime, cooperation aspires to become a movement of the working masses, one of the elements of socialist construction."[52]

Under Romanian law, the cooperatives were considered juridical persons, having legal status as an entity separate from the individuals who were the owners. Cooperatives had the legal capacity to own property, enter into contracts and incur liabilities in their own names. These juridical persons were not part of the state, the organs of the state, or any state institutions or enterprises. In both Decree no. 133 and the later Decree no. 31 of 1954 "On Physical Persons and Juridical Persons," the transformation of cooperatives from tools of capitalism to instruments of socialism is done by redesignation.[53] Decree no. 133 simply states that "Cooperatives are mass organizations of those who work in the cities and villages…" (Art. 1). Decree no. 31 lists the GAC's and other cooperative organizations along with the enterprises and economic organizations of the state as "socialist economic organizations" (Art. 27).

In this respect, Romania followed the model established by the Soviet Union, where private cooperative enterprises existed before 1917, and where the form was utilized for collectivization. Certain early Soviet legal scholars had maintained the position that there were "more similarities than distinctions between cooperative and private ownership," pointing out that since the cooperatives existed in Russia before 1917, their "character as private enterprises evoked no doubts."[54] And as was also the case in the Soviet Union, some of the pre-war Romanian bourgeois cooperatives were "transformed."[55]

As discussed later, the use of a form of juridical person with legal and historical roots in the pre-Communist period had a significant effect on the question of ownership of the land in the collectives. The use of the broad term "Agricultural Production Cooperative" (CAP) to refer to a range of different types of organizations at the inception of the collectivization effort would later provide a basis for confusion among writers on the subject.

Just as the cooperative form was employed to create a more efficient agricultural system out of a fragmented and often uneconomic patchwork of individual landholdings, so was the question of the consolidation of landholdings to create more efficient agriculture addressed by the Plenary. This issue was addressed by Ministry of Agriculture Decree no. 151 of June 10, 1950 "For the Consolidation and Circulation of Agricultural Goods," which replaced Law no. 203 of 1947. Declaring that the existence of property "crumbled into tens of millions of lots" constitutes a "brake on the development of our agriculture," the Minister of Agriculture was charged with organizing a consolidation of land to be accomplished through exchange of property (Arts. 1 and 2). Distribution of land was to be based on a plan drawn up by a local commission and approved by the District People's Council (Art. 4). The procedure and norms of the consolidation were to be established by the Minister of Agriculture, who would also draft the contracts for the acts of exchange (Art. 6–7).

As was the case with the Agrarian Reform Law of 1945, actions taken under Decree-Law no. 151 could not be challenged in court. The concept of "acts of gov-

ernment" had been transformed into virtually all "administrative acts" outside the scope of judicial review.[56] In one notable and rare piece of analysis in *Justiția Nouă,*[57] Professor Z. Oprea argued that the judiciary had erred in failing to consider the claims of a peasant who had attempted to transfer the land he had received in the Act of Exchange to another person, only to see the land given to another by the local authorities. Professor Oprea argued that the courts had been mistaken in refusing to consider the claim because, once the contract of exchange had been executed, the peasant had the right of property over the land. His dispute should be considered under the civil law once the administrative action of merger had been previously completed. There are no signs of any adherents to Professor Oprea's position.

Although there were other legislative acts for the taking of property to punishment offenses or in other respects, Decree no. 151 effected a highly bureaucratic and widespread change in landholdings. As an extensive measure for State land redistribution, it was followed in 1959 by Decree no. 115 "For the Liquidation of the Remains of any Form of Exploitation of Man by Man in Agriculture in the Scope of Continuing the Rise in the Level of Material and Cultural Life of the Working Peasant and of the Development of Socialist Construction."[58] This decree transferred agricultural land which, among other things, belonged to rich peasants "to the extent that it exceeded the power to work of its owner" (Art. 1, 2), over to the GACs and or other socialist agricultural organizations. Decree no. 115 was presented as another attack on the theft of land from the poor peasants by the rich peasants, and a "model" by which the Party resolved the complicated problems of the transition from capitalism to socialism.[59]

Having reviewed the mechanisms by which the State eliminated the capacity of the peasant to transfer land, and by which the State arranged itself for land transfer, the relationship of the peasant and the cooperative organization with respect to land must be examined. Initially, it should be noted that each cooperative organization, as a juridical person, had the right to own property as part of its own patrimony.[60] Also, each cooperative organization was established when its shareholders adopted a charter defining the terms and conditions of participation. Legal existence required government approval, and although Decree no. 133 did not stipulate the exact terms of the charter, certain "Model Charters" were issued to provide the required language. And since there were different types of agricultural cooperative organizations during the period prior to 1962, there were different model-charters. For the purposes of this paper, the only differences in cooperative organizations discussed are those relating to the question of whether the transfer of land to the patrimony of the collective was a requirement of membership in the collective. The technical legal structure of the cooperative organizations was similar to that of other business organizations: the transfer of goods to the organization was the "price" of entry, and the receipt (which could be viewed in the nature of a purchase) of rights in the distribution of benefits from the business activity. This is not surprising from a legal form that was originally part of the nineteenth century Commercial Code.[61]

Of the different forms of agricultural cooperative organizations, the preferred or "superior" form was the collective agricultural farm or GAC referred to by Gheorghiu-Dej in the March 3–5, 1949 Plenary. Although a Model Charter "elaborated" in 1949 was never adopted, a Model Charter was adopted in June, 1953 by Decision no. 1650 Concerning the Model Charter of the Agricultural Collective Farms.[62] Decision no. 1650 provided clearly (Art. 4) that "upon the entry into the collective farm, the members will bring into the patrimony all the land."[63] There was no question that the land brought to the GAC by the members belonged to the GAC.[64]

In contrast the Model Charter adopted in 1952 for the "inferior" form of organization, the agricultural association of peasants ("TOZ") provided for an organization to "work the land in common" (Art. 2).[65] The land remained the property of the peasant (Art. 3). Other simpler forms of cooperation and peasant assistance, as compared to which the TOZ was a "higher" form,[66] did not find a place in the juridical framework of collectivization.

In the September of 1956, a draft Model Charter for a cooperative organization called the agricultural production cooperative with profit (CAP) was published but never approved by the Council of Ministers.[67] It was considered a form inferior to the GAC, but superior to the TOZ: cooperative members would bring their land into the "use" of the cooperative, a right which would not have all of the attributes of the right of property.[68] The peasant would still be the owner of the land, but he "remains a nude proprietor, he keeps only the right of disposition over the land."[69] In view of the continuing in force during the period of Decree no. 151/1950 restricting the alienation of land, the retention of the status of owner under these conditions represents a convergence of law and propaganda and divergence with reality.[70]

Continuing pressure to transform these inferior cooperative forms into the superior GAC form and for the creation of larger collectives resulted in the utilization of a number of legal techniques to effect the transformation, based on Decree no. 31/1954. These techniques included "fusion," sometimes called "merger" or "consolidation," a reorganization in which two or more juridical persons became one through actions of the General Assemblies of each of the merging organizations. It was also possible for the TOZ to be dissolved by action of its General Assembly and then re-established as a GAC.[71]

The 1965 Constitution put an end to all of these cooperative forms, providing for a single form, the "agricultural cooperative of production" (CAP) which had "proved to be the most suitable form of organization of the united work of the peasants, of the development of agriculture on the socialist bases…"[72] In the pages of *Justiția Nouă*, the last references are made to GACs in 1964 and discussion commences of the CAPs in 1965. No CAP had its own charter, but each functioned on the basis of a single charter approved by the Congress of the National Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Production.[73] In the new Model Charter for the CAPs, approved in 1966, the peasants "bring into the cooperative property the land…"[74]

4. SOCIALIST PROPERTY

The concept of socialist property was developed over the period of collectivization within the framework of Romanian civil law as a bifurcated system. Socialist property was defined as socialist property of the State (belonging to the entire people), and also cooperative property (belonging to each cooperative organization).[75] Yet the cooperative organizations, as a matter of law, were owned by their members and not by the State. They became socialist economic organizations because Decree no. 31/1954 declared them to be so: propaganda was written into the law. As explained in a Constitutional Law treatise, property of the State and cooperative property, "being forms of property with socialist character" have a series of "common elements" which define them as "forms of socialist property." For example, these are "socialist forms for ownership of goods, collective forms of ownership of goods by workers… in the case of socialist property of the State, the subject of the ownership is the entire people, in the case of cooperative property, the subject of this ownership is the totality of the members of each cooperative organization."[76]

In the hierarchy of socialist property, State property was higher than cooperative property even though they had the same characteristics: each had an absolute right, an exclusive right, an indefeasible right, an inalienable right and a right immune from seizure. The "higher" level of State property left even serious legal scholars with such absurdities as the right of cooperative property being "less absolute than the social property right of the State."[77] Nor could the phrase "inalienable" be properly applied to cooperative property when the Model Charter of the GACs provided for departing members to receive land equal to that which they brought in "outside of the consolidated perimeter of the collective, from the land of new members" (Art. 16).

These provisions, in which the ideological nature of the socialist legal provisions masked the underlying legal framework of the cooperative activity, have contributed a serious degree of obfuscation to the question of who owned the land in the collectives. Early Soviet scholars had pointed out that the property of cooperative organizations had a number of the attributes of private property. As in the Soviet Union, the reality of cooperative ownership was "distorted" by law and doctrine.[78] The technical legal form contained the attributes of private property but State interference in the activity of the collective farms made cooperative property a "disguised form of state ownership."[79] This distortion was even more pronounced in Romania, where, as discussed above, unlike the Soviet Union, there was no underlying nationalization of the land. In this respect the concept of socialist property bridged an even wider gap between private property attributes of cooperative land ownership and the reality of socialist practices.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The discussion of the three issues presented at the beginning of this study demonstrate some continuity throughout both the pre-communist and communist periods of an idea of the social character of peasant ownership of agricultural land as manifested in Romanian Law.

From the first confirmation of peasant ownership within the legal system of the modern Romanian State, peasant rights were restricted in the name of "high social interests." The specific form of restriction, a limitation on the right of disposition of property so severe as to amount to inalienability, meant that the peasant rights shared an essential characteristic of property in the State public domain rather than the rights of enjoyment and disposition "exclusive and absolute" which defined private property under the Civil Code. The restriction on the right to dispose of land freely was an important element of the collectivization effort; the Communist Law differed more in degree and scope from previous laws than in concept or mechanism. And while the pre-Communist Law contained an element of socialization of peasant property rights, the collectivization effort made use of a legal form, the cooperative organization, which as a pre-existing form of juridical person, resulted in a type of ownership that retained characteristics of private rather than State property.

The use of the cooperative organization as the technical legal form of collectivization provided the basis by which certain ideas, such as peasant free will and democratic control of collective management could be found "both in law and propaganda." However, the mechanism by which this system was rationalized with fundamental socialist ideology on ownership of the means of production was the concept of socialist property, a propaganda concept inserted directly into Romanian Law to provide a socialist face for collectivization. It was only the idea of socialist property and the underlying designation of the cooperative organizations as socialist economic organizations that transformed the system into part of the "road to socialism."

NOTES

1 For a relevant example, see Octavian Roske, ed., *Dosarul Colectivizării Agriculturii în România, 1949–1962* (Bucharest: Parlamentul Romaniei, Camera Deputaților, 1992). See also the editors' bibliography on collectivization in this volume.

2 As discussed more fully below, this confusion was augmented by the use of the term "cooperative agricultural organization," or "CAP," to refer to a specific type of cooperative organization with correspondingly specific rules for peasant inscription. It should also be noted that "cooperative organization" is the juridical term used in law; the term "collective" is also used in this work as an equivalent term and is not used to refer to any specific type of cooperative organization.

3 It should be noted that the ending of this study in 1966 is not meant to imply that there were no further legal changes in the period prior to 1989.

4 Dimitrie Alexandresco, *Principiile Dreptului Civil Român,* vol. 1 (Bucharest: Socec & Co. 1926), 417.
5 Ion Filipescu and Andrei I. Filipescu, *Drept civil, dreptul de proprietate şi alte drepturi reale* (Bucharest: Editura ACTAMI, 2002), 88.
6 Constantin Hamangiu, *Cod Civil Adnotat,* 2 vols. (Bucharest: ALL Beck, 1999) (reprint of 1925 edition), vol. 1, 601.
7 Andrei Rădulescu, *Curs de Drept Civil,* 3rd ed., (Bucharest: privately printed, 1934), 315.
8 Vasile Negru, *Curs de Drept Civil. Partea Generală: Persoane şi bunuri* (Iaşi: Litographia Invaţamântului Unitatea Iaşi, 1956), 270. See also Eugen Chelaru, *Circulaţia juridică a terenurilor* (Bucharest: ALL Beck, 1999), 3; and Liviu Pop, *Dreptul de proprietate şi dezmembrămintele sale* (Bucharest: Lumina Lex, 1996), 36.
9 Constantin Hamangiu, I. Rosetti Bălănescu, and Alexandru Băicoianu, *Tratat de Drept Civil Român* (Bucharest: ALL Beck, 1997), vol. 2, 55.
10 Alexandresco, *Principiile*, 427.
11 Constantin Oprişan, "Sistemul general al proprietăţii în România," *Studii de Drept Românesc,* Serie Nouă, 1 (1995), 6.
12 Since a focus of this discussion is the continuation of legal concepts within the Romanian legal system, no legislation prior to 1864 is discussed. Also, this discussion covers the legislation of the Old Kingdom and does not discuss Transylvania, Crişana, the Banat, Bukovina and Bessarabia because over time the Old Kingdom provisions relevant to this discussion were extended to all these regions.
13 Rădulescu, *Curs de Drept Civil*, 326.
14 Hamangiu et al., *Tratat de Drept Civil,* vol. 2, 3.
15 Hamangiu et al., *Tratat de Drept Civil,* vol. 2, 56. See also the discussion of the extension of the restrictions on alienability imposed by the Constitutional revisions of 1884 in note 8 of the *Jurisprudenţa* related to Article 474 of the Civil Code (in which the legislators of the Constitutional Convention of 1884 were referred to as "preoccupied with 'high social interests' which compelled the extension of the restrictions on alienability"). Hamangiu, *Cod Civil Adnotat,* vol. 1, 591. See also, note 15, 593 discussing the removal of the land from the civil circuit and the inapplicability of general rights of acquisition through adverse possession.
16 Romanian lawyers with whom I have discussed this matter suggest that, in view of the incessant peasant hunger for land, such restrictions could be considered for the benefit of the peasants themselves. In this regard, see Florin Scrieciu, *Drept agrar şi drept funciar* (Bucharest: Lumina Lex, 2000), 437, in which he refers to this restrictive legislation as "laws which seek to protect [the peasants] from their own weaknesses by declaring, for a certain period, the inalienability of the plots they received."
17 Chapter I, paragraph 1.
18 Chapter III, paragraph 22.
19 Chapter V, paragraphs 56–58.
20 Hamangiu, *Cod Civil Adnotat,* vol. 1, note 13 to Civil Code Art. 475, 593.
21 Constitution of June 8, 1884, Art. 132, in Cristian Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituţională a României. Acte şi Documente 1741–1991* (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial, 2000), 428.
22 Alexandru Costin, "Concepţiile actuale ale proprietăţii şi Constituţia," in Institutul Social Român, *Noua Constituţie a României şi Noile Constituţii Europene* (Bucharest: Cultura Naţională, 1922), 267, note 1.
23 Text of "Lege pentru reforma agrară din Vechiul Regat (Oltenia, Muntenia, Moldova şi Dobrogea)" of July 1921, in *Legile Noi* (Bucharest: Viaţa Românească, 1921), Chapters 16 and 17, 58–62.

24 *Monitorul Oficial* (*M.O.*) (13 Martie 1925), no. 53.
25 *M.O.*, (22 March 1937), no. 67. This 1937 law abrogated a 1929 law which eased somewhat the restrictions and formalities on the sale of rural land, "Lege pentru circulația pământurilor dobândite prin legile de împroprietărire" [Law for the Regulation of the Circulation of Land Acquired through the Land Grant Laws], *M.O.* (20 August 1929), no. 183.
26 Law no. 67 applied to land a) acquired under the Rural Law of 1864; b) land sold by the State in small lots of up to 10 ha in Dobrogea and up to 5 ha in the rest of the country on the basis of the laws of 7 April 1889 for the alienation of the goods of the State, as modified; c) acquired through the law of 2 April 1903 for the Grant of Land to Fighters in the War of 1877–1878; d) acquired under the Law of 9 January 1888 for the Grant of Land in Dobrogea of sub-officers with 12 years of uninterrupted service and through the laws of 5 March 1906 and 21 April 1913 for the reengagement of inferior grades in the army; e) lots in extent of up to 5 ha acquired through purchase at the Rural House; and f) land acquired on the basis of all of the agrarian reform laws of 1921.
27 *M.O.* (23 Martie 1945), no. 68 bis, reprinted in *Colecțiunea legislației uzuale* (Bucharest: Editura R. Cioflec, 1945).
28 Salvator Brădeanu, Petre Marica, Lucian Stângu, *Tratat de drept cooperatist agricol*, vol. 1, *Partea Generală: Raporturile juridice interne* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1968), 33.
29 As reprinted in Gheorghe Iancu, Virgiliu Țârau, and Ottmar Traşcă, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Aspecte Legislative* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000), 20–30.
30 The 50 ha ownership limit of the 1937 law was reduced to 15 ha for any accession except through succession.
31 Co-authors of Chapter 1.
32 Brădeanu et al., *Tratat de drept cooperatist agricol*, vol. 1, 33.
33 As reprinted in Brădeanu et al., *Tratat de drept cooperatist agricol,* vol. 1, 33.
34 Constantin G. Rarincescu, *Contenciosul Administrativ Român,* 2nd ed., (Bucharest: Alcalay & Co., 1936), 288–309. It should be noted that as developed by the Law of Administrative Disputes of 1925, the definition of "acts of government" involved "all measures taken for the protection of the general interest concerning the public order, the internal or external security of the State, and other demands of superior order…," 297. See Ovidiu Creangă, "Reforma agrară şi caracterul ei revoluționar," *Justiția Nouă,* 1 (1948), 157–160 for a justification of the analytical basis of Law 177 based on references to French law from the period prior to 1914.
35 "Practica juridică" [Judicial practice], *Justiția Nouă,* 7 (1948), 202. The existence prior to 1947 of other cases interpreting the obligations imposed by the Agrarian Reform Law of 1945 should be noted. "Practica juridică," *Justiția Nouă,* 9 (1948), 503; *Justiția Nouă,* 1 (1951), 83; and *Justiția Nouă,* 1 (1952), 99 (lack of notification to the Minister of Agriculture nullifies sale).
36 Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (presented by), "Raportul Biroului Politic al C.C. al P.M.R. la sedința plenară a C.C. al P.M.R. din 3–5 martie 1949 (fragment)," in Dan Cătănuş and Octavian Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Dimensiunea politică*, vol. 1: *1949–1953* (Bucharest: Institutul Național Pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 54, note 4.
37 Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 753.
38 Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 771.

39 Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională,* 787.

40 See Henry L. Roberts, *Romania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1969); Vera Popescu, "Dreptul de folosință colhoznică asupra pământului," *Justiția Nouă,* 5 (1950), 631; L. I. Denbo, "Raportul juridic colhoznic şi sistemul dreptului sovietic," *Justiția Nouă,* 9–10 (1950), 935–950.

41 For a discussion of the Soviet situation see Olimpiad S. Ioffe, *Soviet Civil Law* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1988), 49; O. N. Sadikov, ed., *Soviet Civil Law* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1988), 114. It should be mentioned that the land reform of 1861 made the commune and not the individual peasant the recipient of the allotment land although later pre-Communist forms were designed to eliminate the communal tenure. Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 78–81. Interwar Romanian legal scholars viewed the Russian commune as the perpetuation of the phase of primitive agriculture under the form of tribal co-property. Hamangiu et al., *Tratat de Drept Civil,* vol. 2. (originally published in 1926), 4–5.

42 Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (presented by), "Raportul Biroului Politic al C.C. al P.M.R. la şedința plenară a C.C. al P.M.R. din 3–5 martie 1949 (fragment)" [Report of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee at the Plenary Meeting of the C.C. al P.M.R. of March 3–5, 1949 (fragment)]," in Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, vol. 1, 61.

43 Gheorghiu-Dej, "Raport," 66.

44 As reprinted in Iancu et al., *Colectivizarea,* 86–88.

45 Although the text of Decree no. 83 is not explicit as to expropriation of the 50 ha, it was interpreted by later legal literature as such and implemented in such fashion. Ernest Lupan, *Drept Cooperatist Agricol* (Bucharest: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1964), 38. See also Dumitru Şandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945 în România* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 236–239.

46 "Stenograma şedinței plenare a C.C. al P.M.R. din 3–5 martie, 1949," in Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 79.

47 "Stenograma din 3–5 martie," in Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 86.

48 "Stenograma din 3–5 martie," in Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea,* 82.

49 "Stenograma din 3–5 martie," in Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 90.

50 Marcel Fischler, "Evoluția Legislației Cooperatiste din Romania în lumina interesului de clasă," *Justitia Nouă,* 8 (1948), 284–287.

51 However, this is not a complete list, as among other laws omitted, he does not discuss the Law on the Organization of Cooperatives of 1935.

52 Mihail Mayo, "Cooperația, instrument de înfăptuire a socialismului," *Justiția Nouă,* 5–6 (1949), 540.

53 See Yolanta Stătescu, "Critica teoriilor burgheze asupra personalității juridice," *Justiția Nouă,* 3 (1951), 296–304; Iosif I. Christian, "Esența persoanei juridice în concepția dreptului socialist," *Studii şi Cercetări Juridice* (1957), 51–53; and Traian Ionaşcu, Mihail Eliescu, Yolanda Eminescu, Virgil Economu, Maria Ioana Eremia, Valentin Georgescu, and Petre Anca, *Organizațiile socialiste ca persoane juridice în România* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1967), 5–22.

54 Olimpiad S. Ioffe, *Development of Civil Law Thinking in the USSR* (Milano: Dott. A. Giuffre Editore, 1989), 203–204.

55 Salvator Brădeanu, Lucian Stângu, Petre Marica, M. Uliesca, A. Cojocaru, *Raporturile juridice ale organizațiilor coooperatiste în etapa actuală* (Bucharest: Editura Academei Române, 1977), 11–14.

56 Ministerul Justiției, *Principii de drept* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiințifică, 1958), 123.

57 "Practica judiciară," *Justiția Nouă,* 7 (1956), 1178–1185.
58 As reprinted in Iancu et al., *Colectivizarea,* 416–420.
59 Constantin Topliceanu, "Succesele regimului democrat popular în construcția socialistă a agriculturii," *Justiția Nouă,* 4 (1959), 658–673.
60 Traian Ionaşcu and Salvator Brădeanu, *Dreptul de proprietate socialistă şi alte drepturi reale principale de tip nou în dreptul Republicii Populare Romîne* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiințifică, 1964), 293–397; Z. Oprea, *Drept Cooperatist Agricol,* Part II (f. l., 1959); Salvator Brădeanu, Petre Marica, and Lucian Stângu, *Tratat de Drept Cooperatist-Agricol,* vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1969). Patrimony is commonly defined as the "totality of rights and obligations that have economic value, belonging to a person." Ministerul Justiției, *Principii de drept*, 195.
61 Ion Poianaru-Bordea and Vasile Vines, *Noul Codice de Comerciu al României* (Bucharest: Editura Tipografiei Dor. Cucu 1889), 148–157.
62 The only discussion of the 1949 text in the juridical literature is its existence, not its contents. Compare Lupan, *Drept Cooperatist Agricol,* 25 (in which he states that it was in force until 1953) with Topliceanu, "Succesele regimului democrat popular," 668 (in which he indicates it was "published"). The 1949 Statut Model was the basis for the establishment of the first GACs and would have determined the conditions of entry for the peasants. In theory those peasants would have had to take action to amend their own GAC statutes after 1953 for the new provisions to apply.
63 As reprinted in Iancu et al., *Colectivizarea,* 262–275.
64 Oprea*, Drept Cooperatist Agricol*, Partea II, 31.
65 "Hotărârea Nr. 99 privind aprobarea statutului model al întovărăşirilor agricole de țărani muncitori pentru cultivarea laolaltă a pământului" as reprinted in Iancu et al., *Colectivizarea*, 189–195.
66 Vasile Bănescu "Întărirea economică şi organzatorică a gospodăriilor agricole colective" in *Probleme de Economie Agrară—Culegere* (Bucharest: Editura de stat pentru literatură politică, 1957), 108.
67 Lupan, *Drept Colectivist Agricol,* 25.
68 Oprea, *Drept Cooperatist Agricol,* 32–33.
69 Oprea, *Drept Cooperatist Agricol,* 36–37.
70 It should be noted that there existed some theoretical issues with respect to the "merger" component of Decree no. 151 because it referred only to the GACs and TOZs although it was thought that the peasant would not be obligated to consent to an exchange on the basis of membership in the CAP. Oprea, *Drept Cooperatist Agricol,* 38.
71 See Ion Filipescu, "Reorganizarea organizațiilor cooperatiste de producție agricole," *Justiția Nouă,* 5 (1961), 32–40. See also Ionaşcu and Brădeanu, *Dreptul de proprietate socialist.*
72 Lucian Stângu, "Probleme legate de proiectele de statut al cooperativei agricole de producție şi al uniunilor cooperatiste," *Justiția Nouă,* 1 (1966), 17.
73 Ernest Lupan, *Drept Cooperatist Agricol* (Bucharest: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1970), 85.
74 Petre Marica, "Statutul cooperativei agricole de producție ca izvor al drepturilor şi obligațiilor membrilor cooperatori," in *Probleme juridice privind agricultura* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiințifică, 1967), 228.
75 Constantin Stătescu, *Drept Civil. Teorie Generală a Drepturilor Reale* (Bucharest: Facultatea de Drept, 1973), 46.

76 Ioan Deleanu, *Drept Constituțional. Tratat elementar* (Bucharest: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1980), 146.
77 Stătescu, *Drept Civil,* 98.
78 Ioffe, *Development of Civil Law Thinking*, 233.
79 Ioffe*, Development of Civil Law Thinking*, 251.

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"Constanța, The First Collectivized Region": Soviet Geo-Political Interests and National and Regional Factors in the Collectivization of Dobrogea (1949–1962)

CONSTANTIN IORDACHI

"We must show a special commitment to Constanța, just to learn from our own experience. That's what the Soviet advisers told us to do."

Minutes of the April 5, 1952 meeting of the RWP Organizational Bureau, filed as Liuba Chişinevschi, "Stenograma şedinţei Biroului Organizatoric al CC al PMR, 5 aprilie 1952," in Dan Cătănuş and Octavian Roske, eds. *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Dimeniunea politică*, vol. 1: 1949–1953 (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 299.

"By completing collectivization, Dobrogean Party and State bodies, agricultural technicians and engineers, as well as Dobrogean peasants *made their region rank highest in the nation*. Already, Party activists from other regions of Romania acknowledge that the pace of collectivization in Dobrogea was an *example and a stimulus* for their own efforts. This acknowledgment is certainly a reward to those who contributed to Constanța's collectivization, encouraging them to work further to turn their collective farms into thriving enterprises able to provide the resources of a good life to their members. Only hard work can make Dobrogea's agriculture an *example and a stimulus* for the agriculture of the entire country [author's emphasis]."

Article in newspaper *Agricultura nouă*, October 25, 1957, 299.

On October 18, 1957, the Agerpress news wire agency and national newspapers such as *Scînteia* (The Spark), *Scînteia Tineretului* (The Young People's Spark), *Dobrogea Nouă* (New Dobrogea) and *Drumul Socialismului* (The Socialist Path) announced the successful completion of collectivization in the Constanța region, presenting it as one of the greatest victories that had been won so far in "the socialist transformation of agriculture." This happened at a time when collectivized land represented barely 51 percent of the country's total land surface, and 52 percent of the total number of households in rural areas. Only nine years after the beginning of the collectivization campaign at the national level (1949), the

historical province of Dobrogea became the first fully collectivized region in Romania, preceding the end of collectivization in the whole country (1957–1962) by five years.

The Party's propaganda bureau had thoroughly prepared this surprise announcement for the press in order to release it simultaneously with, and thus dedicate it to, the 40th anniversary of the Great Socialist Revolution of October 1917. According to the 1956 census, Dobrogea had 635,956 inhabitants and 824,700 hectares of arable land. On May 23, 1957, *Scînteia* announced that 90 percent of the region had been collectivized and that the completion of this process was imminent: "every day, the end of the collectivization process comes closer into view."[1] On June 28, *Scînteia* announced the almost complete collectivization of the region, with 97.7 percent of peasant households and 87.9 percent of the eligible land.[2] In this total, the official propaganda skillfully conflated two forms of peasant associations: collective farms (called *Gospodării Agricole Colective*, or GAC, see Glossary of Terms), regarded as the standard form of socialist organization of agriculture, as well as loose agricultural associations (called TOZs, see glossary), which were seen by peasants as an alternative to full collectivization, but by the regime as a temporary stage toward establishing collective farms. The newspaper maintained that there were "328 GAC farms enrolling 51,281 households and 346,087 ha of land, as well as 337 TOZ agricultural associations, representing 42,671 households and 175,531 ha of land" in the Constanța region. Overall, as the newspaper pointed out, standard collective farms (GAC) encompassed 53.3 percent of "peasant-worker" households and 58.3 percent of arable land. Finally, on July 5, 1957, *Scînteia* triumphantly wrote that "Constanța, the first fully collectivized region" prided itself on having established 328 GAC farms representing 54 percent of the peasant households, while 339 TOZ associations enrolled the remaining 45 percent of households. The total amount of land collectivized was "over 556,000 ha."[3]

The following three months witnessed spectacular progress toward the full collectivization of Dobrogea: over 48,617 households with more than 226,000 ha of land switched from associations to GAC farms. Collectivization ended in October of the same year, when the last fishermen closed the fishing season in the Tulcea district[4] and came home only to (be forced to) join the "Fisherman" GAC farm [!]. An official report on the Constanța region triumphantly noted that "over 100,000 households of ethnic Romanian, Turkish, Tartar, Ukrainian and Macedo-Romanian (i.e., ethnic Romanians from the Southern Balkans) peasants collectively own 575,000 ha of land."[5]

The fast pace of collectivization in Dobrogea raises a series of questions: Why was this region the first to complete collectivization in Romania? What accounted for the much faster pace of collectivization in this area than in other regions? Can one identify a coherent "collectivization model" implemented in Dobrogea? Furthermore, was this collectivization model readily exportable to other regions as well, or was it unique to Dobrogea? I contend that, by answering these questions, one can understand how the national campaign for collectivization varied in

different historical provinces, thus illuminating relations between the center and the periphery.

Official propaganda provided conflicting accounts of the main reasons for the remarkable success of collectivization in Dobrogea. The October 19th issue of *Scînteia* emphasized persuasion and, indirectly, the coercive aspect of it: "in every village or commune, the 30,000 agitators in the region spread the word of the party, arguing that the GACs represented the only way to achieve wealth and collective abundance."[6] More analytical accounts identified "local specificity" or "natural conditions" as factors facilitating collectivization in Dobrogea.[7] However, most propaganda materials rejected explanations crediting "locally specific conditions" with the decicive role in the collectivization of Dobrogea. Instead, they tended to emphasize the class-consciousness of peasants and the effective political activities carried out by state and party representatives. Their goal was to prove that there was nothing special about collectivization in Dobrogea, except for hard work, so that its experience could be easily implemented anywhere else.

In this chapter, I argue that the fast pace of collectivization in Dobrogea can be explained by the complex interaction among several factors. First is the strong Soviet military presence in Dobrogea. Preliminary evidence suggests that the experiment in Dobrogea's full collectivization was pushed by Soviet advisers eager to secure a strategically important area that would allow the USSR to be actively present in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean basin. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Southern Dobrogea—situated just across the border—was the first collectivized region in Bulgaria, thus confirming the existence of a Soviet strategic plan for Dobrogea. A second reason is the ethnic profile of the region, as well as the destabilizing impact of World War II on the ethnic composition and agriculture in this area, which facilitated the collectivization process. Third are the local and national party activists who capitalized on rapid incipient progress in collectivizing this area to transform Dobrogea into an ideal showcase for the national collectivization campaign. Finally, official propaganda played an important role, in that it managed to artificially embellish the success of Dobrogea's collectivization.

The record speed of collectivization in Dobrogea made the province a kind of pilot project for a broader socialist modernization that would affect all means of production in the Constanța region. After 1959, large-scale industrial projects were implemented in the area, such as the modernization of the Constanța harbor and the construction of the Danube–Black Sea Canal, irrigation systems and sea resorts. This program of central investments was comparable in scale with the modernization of Dobrogea that followed its earlier annexation to Romania (1878–1913), with the main difference that socialist modernization also entailed massive social engineering. Following the end of collectivization, the main priority of Dobrogea's development program, published in March 1958, was to modernize agriculture. Dobrogea represented the first large-scale experiment of socialist planning of agriculture in Romania; every other region was supposed to follow this example and to see the province *as modeling its own future*.

The successful case of Dobrogea was popularized nationally in propaganda material describing the miraculous metamorphosis of the "most backward province of the country," from the previous decadent bourgeois era into a region boasting the highest living standards for the rural population under socialism. National party leaders tried to capitalize on the experience of collectivization in Dobrogea in order to hasten the process in the rest of the country.[8] First Secretary of the CC of the RWP Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej recommended, at the national Meeting of Peasants and Workers Working in the Socialist Sector (Constanța, April 3–6, 1958), that "the advanced experience in the socialist transformation of the countryside gained in the Constanța region needs to be studied and followed elsewhere in the country, while also taking into account local specificities."[9] In 1960, a massive propaganda volume was released to "contribute to analyses of this experience."[10]

The example of Dobrogea generated fierce competition between regions, so that collectivization at the national level ended in 1962, three years before the initial deadline. The results in Dobrogea accelerated collectivization all over the country, stimulating other regions to emulate the action plan on which it had been based. It also legitimated communist elites in Romania at a critical time, when the national campaign for collectivization had reached an impasse and Romania (along with Hungary and Poland) was lagging behind other Eastern European countries. Therefore, the political impact of Dobrogea's collectivization greatly exceeded the region's limited economic potential.

From a theoretical point of view, the present study draws on a recent wave of scholarship in history and anthropology that seeks to deconstruct the nation-state by emphasizing its historical, regional and ethno-linguistic diversity. From this perspective, large projects of state- and nation-building and social engineering, such as collectivization, should not be understood as unilateral, top-down endeavors that were faithfully carried out in the periphery. Center-periphery relations are in fact best represented as a complex web of interdependencies, mutual influences and negotiation at multiple social and political levels. Although their impact varied widely, various historical regions had powerful effects on national processes. This approach is crucial for studying the consolidation of the communist regime, because political transformations in this period appear as the result of a complex syncretism between local factors and national political objectives.

1. DOBROGEA: PROPERTY RELATIONS IN A MULTI-ETHNIC IMPERIAL BORDERLAND

1.1. From the Ottoman Empire to the Romanian nation-state

The collectivization of Dobrogea cannot be understood without taking into account the modern socio-political history of the province and its peculiar geographic and demographic features. Dobrogea is separated from the Old Kingdom by the Danube River and is endowed with an peculiar topography. The Danube

Delta and the great lakes of Razelm and Sinoe are found in the north and northeast, arid steppes cover the south and center, and the fertile Danube plains are in the west. Its semi-Mediterranean climate historically favored nomadic sheepherding, but its low humidity and scarcity of rivers made it less hospitable to agriculture than other regions. These peculiarities were reflected in the history of the province's agrarian relations and generated sharp contrasts among Dobrogea's many sub-regions.

From a historical viewpoint, Dobrogea had lengthy experience with Ottoman administration and colonization. Occupied by the Ottomans during the fifteenth century, it became one of the empire's most remote military outposts. Between 1768 and 1878, during the series of devastating Ottoman–Russian wars, the province served as a battlefield and a corridor, being occupied by the Russian army in 1771–1774, 1790–1791, 1809–1810, 1829, and 1853. At the time of its annexation to Romania under the terms of the Treaty of Berlin (1878), Dobrogea carried an Ottoman imperial legacy, most visible in its ethnic landscape, which was one of the most diverse in Europe. The province was inhabited by no less than nineteen ethnic groups, including Turks, Tartars, Romanians, Bulgarians, Russians, Greeks, Armenians, Serbs, Jews, Germans, Italians and Albanians.

The Romanian state annexed the region in 1878, motivated mainly by a combination of economic and geopolitical reasons, soon backed by a nationalist discourse asserting the country's historial rights over the province. By controlling Dobrogea with its Danubian and Black Sea harbors, Romania could enhance its participation in the global trade in cereals, which were a vital part of its economy. In order to consolidate their rule and to expand the borders of the nation-state in the region, Romanian political elites implemented a large-scale program of ethnic colonization, cultural homogenization and economic modernization.[11] They treated Dobrogea as an "internal America," a frontier open for colonization and state expansion, and a major test of the young Romanian state's capacity for cultural assimilation.[12] Administratively, Dobrogea had special status within Romania between 1878 and 1912–1913: although its annexation was consecrated via a constitutional amendment adopted in 1884, the province was in fact subject to an extra-constitutional and highly centralized administrative regime. Under this arrangement, Dobrogeans were granted only a "regional" form of citizenship, which barred them from obtaining political rights at the national level and from being able to purchase real estate outside Dobrogea.[13] Finally, central economic investments in Dobrogea were almost exclusively based on the necessities and priorities of the country's capital city, Bucharest, and not on local priorities.

After thirty-five years (1878–1913), Romanians became the region's ethnic majority; consequently by the Great War, the province was fully incorporated into Romania's administrative and constitutional structures. Major state investments in infrastructure, such as the building of a modern bridge across the Danube and the development of the Constanța harbor into a modern international trade hub, made Dobrogea a crucial component of the national economy. The successful assimilation of Northern Dobrogea encouraged the Romanian elite to annex

Southern Dobrogea, the so-called *Cadrilater* (the Quadrilateral), from Bulgaria, following Romania's intervention in the Second Balkan War (1913). The annexation triggered Bulgaria's military attack against Romania during World War I as part of the military coalition of the Central Powers, resulting in the temporary occupation of Dobrogea, with massive social-economic and demographic consequences. At the end of the war, Romania reannexed Southern Dobrogea; during the interwar years, the newly acquired province was subject to an assimilation regime similar to that of Northern Dobrogea after 1878, including the policy of colonizing ethnic Romanians there from various areas of the Balkan Peninsula (also called Macedo-Romanians). Ethnic conflicts erupted between these colonists and ethnic Bulgarians, especially as a number of Macedo-Romanians were recruited by the fascist Iron Guard in the interwar years.

The losers of Romania's annexation of these territories were the local ethnic Turks and Tartars, who saw their status reduced from a privileged imperial dominant group to that of an ethno-religious minority. On the one hand, Muslim Turks and Tartars were forced to adjust to the institutional framework of a Christian nation-state. On the other hand, the policy of ethnic colonization in Dobrogea was conducted mainly at the expense of Muslim large landowners, who saw their lands expropriated by the Romanian state to make room for Romanian colonists. In the interwar period, the decay of farmers' economic status via land fragmentation and excessive taxation, coupled with Turkey's official policy of attracting Balkan Turks into the new republic, led to an increase in the emigration of Dobrogean Turks, notably during the 1930s.[14]

1.2. Dobrogea during World War II

The collectivization of Dobrogea cannot be understood without taking into account the major ethnic and demographic changes that affected the province during World War II, especially concerning the German and Bulgarian populations. As part of the Nazi repatriation program, 15,000 Dobrogean Germans left for Germany under the terms of the Romanian–German agreement of October 1940. Their 26,141 hectares of land became Romanian state property.[15] Even more important was the return of Southern Dobrogea to Bulgaria on the basis of the 1940 Romanian–Bulgarian Treaty of Craiova. The treaty stipulated a mandatory population exchange; the families affected were obliged to surrender their land but had the right to take their movables with them. A number of 62,278 ethnic Bulgarians, living in 267 villages in the counties of Constanța and Tulcea and organized in 16,000 families, relocated to Bulgaria from Romania. They took with them 18,500 horses, 3,500 pigs, 215,000 sheep and 12,500 cows,[16] but left 11,794 farms and 113,586 hectares of arable land to the Romanian state. In turn, 103,711 ethnic Romanians from Southern Dobrogea (most of them of Macedo-Romanian origin), organized in 23,175 families, moved to Romania. Of this total, 11,856 colonists were settled in Northern Dobrogea villages that had been recently emptied of ethnic Germans and Bulgarians.

The resettling process was greatly complicated by the fact that the immigrants

were not granted full legal ownership over their new properties. In addition, in keeping with the state's need for a centralized system for purchasing foodstuffs, they were compelled to form "colonist agricultural cooperatives" of at least 1,000 hectares of land.[17] Although there is no evidence that the Macedo-Romanian colonists gave in to the forced collectivization more readily because they were not yet attached to their newly acquired land, one can nevertheless argue that their ambiguous legal status, indigence and frictions with native Dobrogeans increased their vulnerability to various forms of administrative pressure for collectivization.[18]

Despite population exchanges and the resettlement of ethnic Germans and Bulgarians, Dobrogea remained a multi-ethnic region. In 1956, out of a total population of 635,950 inhabitants, 560,521 were Romanians, representing 88.1 percent of the total population; 26,639 persons, or 4.2 percent were Russians; 20,253, or 3.2 percent were Tartars; 11,468, or 1.8 percent were Turks; 6,720, or 1.1 percent were Ukrainians and Ruthenians; 904 persons were of Bulgarian origin; and 9,445, or 1.5 percent belonged to various other ethnic groups.[19] These ethnic groups were all organized in quasi-distinct communities, and displayed particular sets of religious and social characteristics having great relevance for property relations.

1.3 Property relations

The demography and political history of Dobrogea shaped the region's agrarian and property relations. In 1945, Dobrogea had a low population density and low productivity per hectare. Its landed property was polarized between large estates and heavily fragmented small plots. Its agricultural economy was complemented by fishing and sheepherding, while its urban growth was almost exclusively concentrated in the major cities of Constanța and Tulcea.

Policies of ethnic colonization and the immigration influx made Dobrogea's population grow steadily from circa 100,000 inhabitants in 1878 to 539,000 in 1948, 636,000 in 1956 and 661,000 in 1958.[20] Population density also increased from 16.7 inhabitants per square kilometer in 1900 to 33.1 in 1948, and 39 in 1956 (when the national average was 76).[21] Overall, Dobrogea remained an underpopulated region, a feature aggravated by significant population loss during 1941–1948.

Given this low population density and the vast expanses of available land, Dobrogea did not face an "agrarian problem," as did other regions of Romania. At the end of the nineteenth century, the per capita average distribution of land in small farms (i.e., between one and ten hectares) was 7.66 ha in Dobrogea, as compared to only 3.5 in the Old Kingdom. Medium farms (between 10 and 50 ha) accounted for 39.88 percent of land in Dobrogea and only 5.4 percent in the Old Kingdom. Finally, the average land surface of large farms (over 50 ha) was 208.56 ha in Dobrogea and 695.84 in the Old Kingdom.[22] Given this more balanced land distribution, Dobrogea was the only region untouched by the great peasant revolt of 1907. Consequently, at a time when in the Old Kingdom land fragmentation, coupled with rapid population growth, generated high social pressures for land

redistribution, Dobrogea served as a "frontier" for colonists from across the country, especially from the Great Romanian Plains (the so-called Bărăgan). In this way, Dobrogea contributed to the appeasement of tense social relations at the national level in the absence of a radical reform of agrarian relations.

After 1940, the Romanian–Bulgarian population exchange generated a class of poor immigrant peasants who later came to constitute the social basis of early collectivization in the region. In 1941, 14.1 percent of peasants in Dobrogea owned less than 0.1 ha, while 7 percent owned between half a hectare and one hectare. At the same time, Dobrogea had a better distribution of medium and large landholdings than the rest of Romania, with 27 percent of Dobrogean peasants owning between 5 and 10 ha, compared with 20 percent in the rest of the country; and 14.4 percent owning between 10 and 20 ha, compared with 5.1 percent for the rest of the country. Finally, large landholdings between 200 and 1,500 ha were owned by 1.7 percent of Dobrogeans—as compared to the national average of 0.3 percent—and played an important economic role.

The 1945 land reform considerably reduced the number of peasant paupers, yet the structure of Dobrogean property relations did not undergo major transformations. The reform was primarily motivated by political and not economic imperatives; its main aim was not to consolidate small and medium sized land properties, but to dismantle large landholdings.[23] The reform expropriated 1,122 large landlords, distributing 62,377 ha to 18,187 peasant families that received, on average, a paltry 2.87 ha per family. Land transfers largely benefited the state domain. In its capacity as successor to the land titles held by the Ottoman Porte, the government had been the largest landowner in Dobrogea as early as 1880. Following the 1945 land reform, the Romanian state owned 30 percent of Dobrogean land, using it to expand the socialist sector in agriculture from the first stage of collectivization.[24] In 1949–1951, the communist government created eleven State Farms (GASs; see Glossary of Terms) and five Machine and Tractor Stations (SMTs; see Glossary of Terms) in Tulcea county alone. By strengthening the socialist sector in agriculture and increasingly competing with the largely private agricultural sector, GAS farms and SMT centers indirectly helped the collectivization effort.

Social stratification left a specific imprint on Dobrogean collectivization. The availability of a class of poor peasants made early collectivization particularly fast in the first stage of collectivization, but resistance mounted by medium-sized farms led to stagnation in the second stage.

1.4. Soviet involvement in Dobrogea and the Danube–Black Sea Canal (1949–1953)

Dobrogea's postwar development was shaped by active Soviet involvement.[25] In July and August of 1944, Dobrogea became an area of military operations. After the war the USSR stationed in the province the biggest Red Army contingent in Romania, and Constanța served as the headquarters of the Soviet Command for the army's southeastern flank.[26] The Soviet occupation of Dobrogea was yet another episode in the great powers' struggle to dominate the maritime Danube.

In 1878, the Congress of Berlin had allowed Romania to annex Dobrogea in order to remove the Danube Delta from Russian influence. Sixty-seven years later, the Soviet victory dealt a decisive blow to British and French interests in this region (expressed via the European Commission of the Danube) and reinstated Moscow as the center of power.[27]

As a strategic bridgehead to the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean, Dobrogea was the cornerstone of Soviet domination over the lower Danube. Consequently, the province served as a pilot project of Soviet modernization. Soviet advisers were dispatched in the province in order to assist the Romanian government in collectivizing the region, and to reorganize it economically and militarily, in accordance with Soviet interests. To contribute to the rapid Sovietization of Dobrogea, numerous Soviet governmental teams consisting of agricultural experts and members of collective farms visited the region, sharing their "advanced" experience with Dobrogean collectivized peasants.[28]

The economic development of the province was declared a government priority, and it benefited from massive central investments. Authorities attached a crucial importance in Dobrogea's economic reorganization to the construction of the Danube–Black Sea Canal, which was to shorten access to the Black Sea by 400 km. The decision to build the canal was made by the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECOM) on January 25, 1949 at the behest of the Soviets, who promised to lend technical and financial support. The attentive Soviet supervision of the canal works—the largest economic investment in socialist countries at the time—as well as the building of military facilities throughout Dobrogea (a Soviet submarine base was designed for the town of Mangalia) and the modernization of Constanța port, fed the Romanians' suspicion that the project was part of an economic and military Soviet strategy to improve its access to the Danube and strengthen its grip on the Balkans. Rumors also circulated that upon completion of the project the Soviets would annex the Danube Delta and only permit Romania to access the Black Sea via the canal.[29] In addition to its military component, the canal had an important economic role, as side projects were designed to build irrigation, roads, oil drilling facilities and large farms. To ensure a steady flow of foodstuffs for workers, six model farms were set up along the canal, using both free workers and prisoners.

After four years of toil, work on the canal was halted in 1953, following Stalin's death, due to insurmountable technical and financial problems. Despite the large investments in the agricultural sector, the six farms built for canal workers came to represent huge economic failures. The canal was nevertheless instrumental in consolidating Dobrogea's repressive system, directly impacting the collectivization process. My interviewees from Jurilovca were keenly aware of the existence of forced labor camps in the province.

The Soviet military presence in Dobrogea also generated demographic changes by encouraging the emigration of the Lipoveni, whose number consequently decreased from 43,074 in 1945 to 27,375 in 1948.[30]

The Soviet presence also contributed to the political mobilization of the Lipo-

veni, and numerous local reports accused prospective emigrants of refusing to pay taxes, illegally bearing weapons, conducting espionage and fostering separatism.[31] Separatist activism was a major concern for Romanian authorities, all the more so as high-ranking Soviet officers spread rumors about the imminent annexation of Dobrogea to the USSR.

2. COLLECTIVIZATION IN DOBROGEA

2.1. The timeline

Collectivization in Dobrogea unfolded in three stages: 1949–1952, 1953–1955 and 1956–1957. Although these stages correspond, by and large, to those identified by Levy and Oprea at the national level, they display nevertheless certain peculiarities. The first stage (1949–1952) made Dobrogea a paragon of quick collectivization by showing how poor peasants joined collective farms *en masse*. As a result, despite the 1953–1955 slowdown, the Dobrogean region of Constanța boasted 36.1 percent of collectivized households in 1956, as compared to a national average of only 11.5 percent. The major collectivization push in Dobrogea occurred during the final stage (1956–1957), when local party cadres mounted a campaign of unprecedented intensity that led to the complete collectivization of the region.

The first collective farms (GACs) in Dobrogea were established in 1949 in three villages: Ceamurlia de Jos (Istria district), Ion Corvin (Adamclisi district) and Făcăieni (Feteşti district). These villages were all affected by the shortage of draft animals, low population density, emigration and war casualties. This made small family households vulnerable to political and administrative pressure. The names of the first collective farms are suggestive for the political language employed by the new regime: "*Răsăritul*" [Sunrise], "*Secera şi ciocanul*" [Hammer and Sickle] and "*Progresul*" [Progress]. By September 1950, Dobrogea already had 60 GACs, with four more soon to be inaugurated. Reznicenco, the chief Party secretary of Constanța county, explained the success of the collectivization campaign in the following way:

> In Constanța one can explain the quicker pace of collectivization by pointing to the propaganda effort made by the Party's central organizations in Constanța, more than by the role of village level Party activists. What can account for this? Well, objective conditions made this outcome possible: poor land, large surfaces, a shortage of implements and labor. Peasants had already been relocated from their original land and therefore do not feel very attached to what they have now. All these conditions were already in place when we started collectivization.[32]

If poor peasants were indeed a relatively easy target for party propaganda, middle income and well-to-do peasants were openly hostile, and their resistance had to be defeated by special means. This was done by first destroying the economic base of great landlords in 1949.[33] By the summer of 1952, most landlords were arrested and sent to labor camps throughout Romania (Sfântu Gheorghe, Târgu Neamț, Buzău and Râmnicu Sărat). The move was meant to eliminate large landowners, to spread fear and to break the will to resist in villages, by disrupting local clientele networks.

After the mass persecutions against large landlords were over, the next stage was marked by the Party's efforts to persuade middle peasants to voluntarily join the collective farm, a campaign that fell on deaf ears and was marked by abuses. Faced with failure, the communist leadership started a violent campaign for eliminating the *chiaburi*, called *dechiaburization* (an equivalent of Soviet *dekulakization*). In order to justify the large-scale use of violence, Reznicenco pointed out that he first made repeated attempts at "reconciliation."[34] His campaign was unsuccessful, prompting him to take exceptional measures. Misinterpreting his instructions, local activists started a violent anti-*chiaburi* campaign, which was out of the Party's control:

> I personally roamed the villages and took [violent] *dechiaburization* measures. Yet, throughout the country, the whole campaign became anarchic and unstoppable, despite our intention to adopt a more structured approach. It was so bad that in five or seven cases the campaign was in patent violation of instructions. Therefore we had to call on the RWP prime secretaries to step in and restore legality.[35]

The intensity and scale of the abuses were so egregious that the Bucharest leadership criticized the regional leadership on the grounds that its teams of activists and secretaries used "methods to intimidate the *chiaburi* that are reminiscent of those used by the Iron Guard, which makes us suspicious that some of them may be former Iron Guard types."[36] This criticism, issued by leader Teohari Georgescu, was shared by Reznicenco, who admitted openly that *dechiaburization* was done in a manner that "did not correspond to the Party line" and blamed abuses on "people on whom we did no background checks, carriage drivers and wine merchants"[37] whom the Party had accepted as members.

Overall, however, early collectivization made significant progress. The official statistics showed that during the first stage of collectivization (1949–1951), 68.3 percent of the new GAC members were landless peasants or owners of very small plots. By 1951, their proportion decreased only to 61.9 percent. Middle peasants were comparatively fewer in number, although their land would make up 56 percent of the entire collectivized land in Dobrogea.[38]

In 1952 the Party could boast that some form of collectivized land exploitation already existed in most villages. Despite these early successes, collectivization was

in fact out of steam by 1952, and the Party set out to devise alternative strategies for expanding collective farm membership. One of these strategies was to lure the young and village elites (such as teachers and priests) to sign up. As Reznicenco put it, the idea was that "if they sign up, the masses should follow in their footsteps."[39] Another strategy was to attract ethnic minorities the Party labeled as "docile," such as Tartars and Lipoveni, by offering them positions in the local Party apparatus. An ethnic Greek refugee from Dobrogea summed up the Party strategy of cooptation in the following way:

> In the districts, frontline Party members are recruited from among the Tartars and the Lipoveni, who are given the most important leadership positions, and this attracts the hatred of both villagers and urbanites alike. The poor are next in the selection pool, with farmhands, field guards, cowherds, indigent peasants of the plains enjoying the best chances, often ahead of intellectuals and small owners. The older intellectuals, teachers and schoolmasters are held under suspicion for anti-regime attitudes and are therefore ineligible. Both in the countryside and in villages, the Party prefers to recruit from among the youth with a high school diploma, who now are in the position to issue orders to the established class of teachers with experience and university degrees simply because they have a Party card.[40]

To get a full picture of the situation in the county of Constanța, the Central Committee asked for a report from the county Party organization. Presented by Reznicenco at the meeting of the committee on April 5, 1952, the report showed that 45 percent of farmland was now incorporated into socialist property and that the fast pace of collectivization was due to the active role played by the Party during the campaign:[41]

> The cause of this success was many long years of Party activity. In several districts, we have good committees who were up to their tasks. It is also relevant that the province has a lot of land per capita. The canal, campaigns of taxation and requisitions—these are important elements. Also, people are not attached to their land as much, because many of them are settlers. Finally, the land has a uniform quality without major topographical differences.[42]

The report stated that one of the reasons why collectivization slowed down was that many of the voluntary cooperatives created during the early stages of collectivization were dissolving. To prevent this, the Party established the state-controlled TOZ associations. Another measure was the disciplining of collective farms members who refused to work. At the end of the committee meeting, Ana Pauker praised the Constanța Party organization:

> Constanța did a good job with their collectivization campaign. There is a lot of hard work ahead and they have to be aware that they enjoyed a preferential treatment in resource allocation, yet the fact remains that they did an excellent job and can be given as an example for other regions.[43]

Secretaries were exhorted to write propaganda articles in *Scînteia*. The idea that collectivization in Dobrogea could be used as a showcase for the rest of the country thus gained ground in the capital. During the same meeting, Liuba Chişinevschi affirmed that the Soviet advisers suggested the idea: "We must show a special commitment for Constanța, just to learn from our own experience. That's what the Soviet advisers told us to do."[44]

Towards the end of 1952, after the purge of the Party faction led by Ana Pauker and Vasile Luca, the Party leadership resumed collectivization with renewed energy. This marked the beginning of the second stage (1953–1955), which bore modest results—a situation blamed on a "damaging sense of self-congratulation."[45] Thus, in 1954, only one new collective farm was established in Dobrogea, and by 1955, the total number of collective farms barely reached 497, covering 319,945 ha of land and counting 44,445 families as members. This stagnation was also evident at the national level, as part of a timid de-Stalinization process (the so-called "new direction" in policy) that Robert Levy sees as a transition towards the third, more energetic stage.

Stagnation in the collectivization campaign was accompanied by significant political concessions, such as widespread action by *chiaburi* to obtain their removal from the official *chiaburi* lists. During the June 1st, 1955 meeting of the RWP Central Committee, which was scheduled to address how district organizations were enforcing a Politburo resolution on reexamining these lists, the First Secretary of Constanța, Vintilă Marin, showed that after two months of work, the special commissions charged with implementing that resolution crossed off the list all middle peasants who gave land to collective farms and no longer used paid labor. The Central Committee Secretariate indicated that major mistakes were being made in implementing the Politburo resolution: out of 3,611 *chiaburi* in 1954, only 197 were left in 1955,[46] and out of 2,411 *chiaburi* subject to fixed production quotas in 1954, there were only 167 remaning in 1955.[47] He further criticized the fact that, as a consequence of the middle peasants' strategy to voluntarily cede land to poor peasants, 40,168 ha were now subject to reduced production quotas, which meant that the state would lose 12,000 tons of cereal. Consequently, the Secretariate recommended establishing commissions charged with reanalyzing the lists of *chiaburi*, and with annulling land donations made by *chiaburi* to poor peasants, so that the state could demand bigger production quotas of them.

2.2. The last wave of collectivization: 1956–1957

After a brief period of de-Stalinization, during which the collectivization campaign was relaxed, the government began experimenting with new collectivization

methods in Galați between 1955 and 1956 (see the chapter by Oprea in this volume). Following the success of the "Galați experiment," the communist leadership decided to resume collectivization in the entire country.

The Constanța region was given priority in official collectivization plans because the campaign was already quite advanced there relative to other regions. Thus, at the end of the first Five-Year Plan (1950–1955), Constanța ranked first, with 67.1 percent of its land in socialist ownership (either state or collective ownership, relative to 30.9 percent in 1950). Out of this total, the degree of collectivization increased from 5.2 percent of arable land in 1950 to 47 percent in 1955.[48] This performance won the Constanța region praise from Secretary General Gheorghiu-Dej himself in an April 10, 1954 speech, as well as in his report of the 1956 Second Party Congress.[49]

Encouraged by this recognition, Constanța authorities resolved to carry out the process in record time. The collectivization methods to be pursued nevertheless created a split between a moderate wing led by Vintilă Marin, First Secretary of the Regional Party Committee, and a radical wing led by Vasile Vâlcu, a high profile Party apparatchik of Bulgarian origin who claimed the merit of establishing the first GAC in Ceamurlia de Jos (Tulcea county), his native village. A Dobrogea refugee described these internecine fights as follows:

> There were several stories about divergences among the local Party people with regard to the best methods for collectivization. Eventually, Vasile Vâlcu's faction emerged victorious; most of them came from the ranks of the district requisition collectors, led by Manolache, chief regional collector, who became famous for unleashing terror during collectivization. Owing to his brutal methods, he had the best record for collectivizing in the country for three years running. The government was aware of the relative capacity of each faction to enforce Party policies and consequently demoted Marin, appointing Vâlcu as the region's First Secretary.[50]

In February 1956, the Constanța Regional Committee, led by Vâlcu, held its plenary meeting, during which it sketched out a template for completing collectivization in the region.[51] Approved by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee during the summer of 1956, the plan envisioned the complete collectivization of three Dobrogean districts in that year (Negru Vodă, Hârşova, Medgidia), three districts in 1957 (Istria, Băneasa, Feteşti) and a final one in 1958 (Tulcea), for a total of seven. Overall, the percentage of collectivized peasants was to increase from 56 percent of the total rural population in mid-1956 to 83 percent at the end of that year, 98 percent in 1957 and 100 percent in 1958.[52] The most dramatic progress was envisioned for the Tulcea district, where only 15.1 percent of peasants were enrolled in collective farms by mid-1956. In order to reach these ambitious goals, local initiatives for collectivization were decentralized and were to receive important resources. Party branches had to focus on recruiting agitators

and concentrating activists in "pilot villages," on the assumption that once these leading villages were collectivized, neighboring villages would follow.[53] In addition, the Regional Committee demanded considerable central investments in Dobrogea's agricultural infrastructure, for propagandistic reasons.

On this basis a collectivization campaign of unprecedented virulence was unleashed in 1956. Aiming to complete the job in record time, the campaign refined the authorities' propaganda techniques.[54] For example, the favored profile of the Party-appointed activist was no longer the ideologically fanatic young man, but the tactful middle-aged man, whose initial objective was to win over several influential men in the village to collectivization. Another innovative technique was to organize Sunday luncheons, for both collectivized and non-collectivized peasants, in village institutions rather than in Party headquarters. During these luncheons, collectivized peasants were to campaign assiduously among private farmers for the cause of collectivization. Other propaganda instruments included specialized radio broadcasts, mobile cinema "caravans," official visits of the central Party leadership, evening courses for leading GAC workers and door to door propaganda work.

Along with propaganda, the regime also employed harsh repressive instruments: administrative and economic harassment, violence, arrests, labor camps on construction sites—or police, paramilitary and army intervention against resisting villages. A typical weapon was tax bullying: the tax collector would go door to door, demand exorbitant taxes and promise to return to the village weeks later to collect them. Panicked peasants would file complaints at the village people's council, but their complaints were rejected. The local administration would informally suggest to them that the only way to get rid of the tax collector was to join the GAC. A method widely used in Feteşti and Medgidia, as well as around Ciulnița and Bucharest, was to place weapons in the homes of resisting peasants while they were in the field, and then to conduct house-to-house searches for the weapons. The search would naturally end with the resistant peasant's arrest.[55]

Finally, the regime enhanced the effects of propaganda with disinformation campaigns. Party apparatchiks promised peasants that only arable land would be collectivized, overdue taxes would be forgiven and vineyards, pastures and orchards were exempt from the collectivization drive. Facing strong pressure from above, peasants tactically accepted to join TOZ agricultural associations in order to camouflage their resistance to full collectivization. By strategically dividing up their land and distributing parts of it to their extended family members, peasants brought smaller plots of arable land to the associations than they possessed in reality. In exchange, they became members of cooperatives and thus hoped to avoid political repression. This widespread tactic accounts for the high number of TOZ agricultural cooperatives in Dobrogea, making up 46.2 percent of all farms in July 1957, when the province was declared "fully cooperativized":

TABLE 1. *The distribution of land in Dobrogea in July 1957*

By district	*Collective Farms*		TOZ *Associations*	
	Families (%)	Land (%)	Families (%)	Land (%)
Adamclisi	69	73	31	27
Feteşti	40	44	60	56
Hârşova	100	100	—	—
Istria	50	58	50	42
Medgidia	60	69.5	40	30.5
Negru Vodă	66.8	70	33.2	30
Tulcea	21.1	20	78.9	80
By region	53.8	64.5	46.2	35.5

Source: Haria and Dulea, *Constanța*, 17.

In the long run, this peasant resistance strategy was ineffective. In August-October 1957, authorities automatically converted all associations into collective farms, despite the members' opposition, so that by October 19 Dobrogea had no associations left. Moreover, shortly after collectivization was completed in Constanța, authorities also confiscated peasants' vineyards, pastures, orchards and even farm equipment. Overdue taxes were deducted from monthly wages paid by collective farms. As a consequence, peasants in the Tulcea district rioted. This district was the last to be collectivized and was rich in vineyard areas (such as the areas of Babadag, Sarica, Niculițel and Bodila). The Tulcea riots were followed by collective action in Isaccea on April 16, 1958, when peasants demanded the outright dismantling of the GAC, as well as in Zebil, Niculițel and Valea Teilor, where it was rumored that peasants might get back their entry petitions to the GAC. The riots were put down by police and army units and resulted in the deaths of two People's Council chairmen and the wounding of many peasants and officials. The "pacification" operation was led by Vâlcu himself, who ordered massive arrests among the rioters.[56] To escape arrests and the ensuing prison terms, many rioters took refuge in the neighboring forests.

The official completion of collectivization was marked by countless festivities. Its main instigator and artisan, Vasile Vâlcu, was decorated, promoted, and rewarded with a place on the Party's Central Committee. The triumphant mood was nevertheless marred by the brutal repression and continuing riots in Galați and

Dobrogea. The end of collectivization brought a new wave of political repression: in 1959, over 150 people were arrested and sentenced to prison terms. They also had their property confiscated and their families deported for their involvement in resistance.[57]

3. CASE STUDY: COLLECTIVIZATION IN THE VILLAGE OF JURILOVCA

The process of collectivization in the village of Jurilovca illustrates the main features of the regional collectivization campaign in Dobrogea. Situated in Tulcea county, on the banks of Lake Razelm, today the village is part of the wildlife reserve of the Danube Delta, established in 1993.[58] Jurilovca is an interesting case study from several viewpoints. First, it has always had a multi-ethnic population dominated nevertheless numerically by Russian Old Believers. At the end of the nineteenth century, out of 1,941 inhabitants, there were 1,828 Russian Old Believers (Lipoveni), 17 Bulgarians and five Turks.[59] The village had 1,341 ha of arable land, 416 houses, 15 mills and 17 water wells. Possession of land was unevenly split between peasants and the Romanian state, with the former owning 529 ha and the latter 812 ha.[60] Between 1903 and 1922, the Romanian state colonized a number of ethnic Romanian families of war veterans, each receiving a plot of up to 10 ha.[61] Villagers worked mostly in fishing (since 1953 Razelm hosts the biggest fishing company in the Danube Delta), with agriculture serving as a subsidiary source of livelihood, albeit more so in the case of the colonist population.

Jurilovca therefore invites a comparative investigation of the impact of collectivization upon a multi-ethnic community and a mixed fishing-farming village economy. The case study underscores the coercive means used by the communist authorities in order to penetrate a closed ethnic and confessional community and to convert a local economy based on fishing and private property into one that would rely mostly on farming and collective property. This micro-historical analysis is based on oral interviews with people who participated in collectivization in Jurilovca and on primary research conducted in the village's archive, substantiated with material from the national archives.[62] It focuses on the following aspects: ethnic structure, property relations, type of village economy, the timeline of collectivization, coercive techniques deployed by authorities, modes of classifying middle peasants as *chiaburi* and the impact of collectivization on the local economy.

3.1. The Lipoveni: a closed ethno-religious community

In the seventeenth century, groups of Russian-speaking Orthodox Christians who came to be known as Old Believers (called Lipoveni in Romania) emigrated from Russia to Dobrogea in several waves. Their emigration was triggered by the centralizing reforms initiated in the Russian Orthodox Church by Patriarch Nikon in 1654, and continued under Peter the Great (1682–1725). These reforms

aimed to unify religious ritual and centralize clerical authority. All who resisted change were compelled to emigrate towards the Cossack-controlled regions of the Don and Dnepr Rivers and then to Poland, the Ottoman Empire and even further to Alaska. After mounting a number of revolts against the Tsar alongside the Cossacks, Old Believers led by Ignat Nekrasov migrated to Dobrogea and settled between Tulcea and Babadag. Living as fishermen, they founded the villages of Sarichioi and Jurilovca some time during the eighteenth century.[63] Some of these Old Believers also settled in the villages of Slava Rusă and Slava Cercheză, both located in mountainous regions southeast of Babadag, and took up farming.

The relationship between ethnicity, religion and mother tongue is very complex within the Lipoveni community. Customarily, Orthodox Christians belonging to the old rite call each other *staroveri* or *starobreadti* ("those of old faith/rite").[64] The more generic term of "*Lipovean*" probably originates either from the Russian *lipa* (lime-tree), or from the name of the monk Filip of Oloneț.[65] From a denominational viewpoint, after their separation from the official Russian Orthodox Church, these old-rite Orthodox Christians split into the *bezpopovti* branch (who altogether rejected the clergy as inherently corrupt) and *beglopopovti*, who, although they rejected the clergy educated and anointed by the Russian Orthodox Church, nevertheless accepted dissident priests who served by the canons of the old rite. In 1846, an old rite arch-bishopric (*mitropolie*) was established in Fântâna Albă, Bukovina. Priests of the Lipoveni were anointed there until 1940, when the arch-bishopric was brought closer to where the Lipoveni resided, in Brăila.[66] The Lipoveni who accepted the authority of this arch-bishop came to be called *popovti* ("with priests") and those who rejected it *bezpopovti* ("without priests"). After 1989, the *bezpopovti* finally accepted the authority of the archbishop of Novozabkov, established in 1923.[67]

Ethnically speaking, most Old Believers are ethnic Russians and marry within the boundaries of their kin; marriage of men outside the clan is assumed to lead to "losing" the children under the alien mother's influence. Over time, however, members of other ethnic groups also adopted the old rite and the Lipoveni's way of life, thus effectively assimilating into the community. The Jurilovca records indicate that many ethnic Romanian men married Lipovan women, which, by custom, required the men to assimilate to the old rite. At times, assimilated foreigners also adopted Russian as a mother tongue, although there were also cases in which they preserved their linguistic identity.

In anthropological research, the Lipoveni are considered a *closed nativist ethno-confessional group* that actively resisted the campaign of Western-style modernization conducted by the Russian central authorities, re-affirming their native culture.[68] Following their immigration to Dobrogea, they enjoyed full religious freedom and tax privileges under Ottoman rule. Upon the province's annexation to Romania, Lipoveni were confronted with the bureaucratic rigors of the modern nation-state, especially the enhanced role played by representatives of the central

government in issues pertaining to civil marriage, civil records and military service in the community.[69] Despite pressure to integrate into the larger national community and fulfill citizenship duties to the Romanian state, until 1946 the religious freedom and the cultural autonomy of Lipoveni remained largely unabridged. This situation changed for the worse during the communist regime, when policies of nationalization, collectivization and secularization constituted an unprecedented onslaught on the Lipoveni way of life.

3.2. Nationalization in Jurilovca

During the interwar years, the village economy in Jurilovca was dominated by fishing and its ancillary services, such as transportation. Local fishermen worked for employers managing distribution centers (called *cherhanale*), who provided them with boats and fishing equipment and paid them based on the quantity of fish caught. The employers lived in the area, but a few also commuted to Constanța and Techirghiol. Complementing the service economy were agencies for renting fishing equipment and fish transportation entrepreneurs, who delivered fish at regular intervals to the cities of Tulcea, located 53 km away, and Constanța, 89 km away.

During the fishing season, the Lipoveni might sail very long distances for extended periods of time, with some of them fishing as far as the Black Sea. Although fish were abundant, competition was intense and fishermen's income modest. Unlike villagers who farmed, Lipoveni measured their wealth in boats and fishing equipment. Wealthier fishermen had boats and fishing tools, and worked for their patrons on better terms: they had to give the company only half of the harvest. Those who did not own boats and fishing tools would rent them from the bosses and were subject to harsher contractual terms. Poor peasants could only pool their resources to buy tools and boats. Those who did not manage to stay competitive in fishing were forced to become farmhands.

> S.D.: What would people call a well-to-do man, a well-to-do fisherman? What made him rich?
> C.B.: To be well-to-do was to own a big boat and a small boat, to own equipment adapted for Lake Razelm and equipment for fishing in the [Black] Sea, and to be able to hire people. People would come to ask this man to book them jobs for the fishing season.[70]

Another interviewee indicated that his wife brought a cow into the family as dowry, yet he decided to sell it to buy a boat.

The division of labor between men and women in the village was well defined. Men worked mainly as fishermen, except in the summer, when fishing was prohibited. Men were the main breadwinners, yet most often women toiled even harder, rearing children, cooking, farming the family land or working as farmhands, spinning fishing nets and even harvesting fish for household consumption when men were away.

Things were different with the Romanian colonists in the village. Having arrived in waves, these families of war veterans had a difficult time adjusting and largely failed economically. Despite receiving relatively substantial plots of land (10 ha), the land was situated at a distance from the village and the state did not help the colonists with farm equipment. Colonists' poverty and their difficulty acclimating to the Delta also inhibited their social integration into the local village community. In Jurilovca, these war veterans were segregated along an ethnically distinct street and were increasingly affected by the lack of proper farming equipment and by land fragmentation. Furthermore, they failed to build their own church and had to attend service in the neighboring village of Sălcioara. As a consequence of the marginal position of the Romanian group, Jurilovca should be considered as a unitary village marked by the ethnic preponderance of one group (the Lipoveni), rather than as an ethnically divided village.[71]

Property relations in Jurilovca changed after 1945. First, Ş.B., a *cherhanea* owner and chairman of the "Trade Union of Fishermen and Hunters," bought the Jirilovca *cherhanea* and then opened another one in Dranov. The Trade Union provided fishermen with the necessary fishing gear, yet their contractual terms in relation to the *cherhanea* owners remained untouched. The most radical change by far was the nationalization of 1948, when the state established Rompescăria, a state company that would administer the state monopoly on fishing and the nationalized fishing companies.[72]

At first, Jurilovca fishermen worked for Rompescăria with individual contracts, but in 1950, the newly created Razelm Jurilovca Agency made fishing with privately owned equipment illegal. At the same time, the Agency gave jobs to many fishermen, who were paid by the amount of fish they harvested. In 1953, the state established the Jurilovca Fishing Company (JFC), chaired for more than a decade by A.C., a man who grew to enjoy a reputation as a good administrator. JFC introduced modern fishing techniques to Jurilovca and hired the *Lipoveni* as full time employees. This enabled them to earn a steady income year-round for the first time, and to have social insurance, old age benefits, clothing and food stamps as well as career prospects beyond the narrow horizon of Jurilovca.

Although nationalization successfully eliminated intermediaries from both harvesting and trading fish and instituted the state's absolute monopoly over fishing in the Danube Delta, the state was less successful at penetrating social relations in Jurilovca. To control the Jurilovca community, the state used power brokers recruited from the community itself. Probably the most prominent among these was A.C., the JFC manager, who beyond enjoying the Party's support was also widely respected in the community. A.C. is a figure often mentioned in interviews. Some see him as a severe character who carried a whip to discipline fishermen who disobeyed the rules. Others remember him as a harsh yet fair man. The reality was that A.C. served as an intermediary link between the Party and the community, who managed and negotiated relations between the two. Although I found no evidence of his role in collectivization, I nevertheless unearthed proof

that A.C. worked closely with the mayor and with the local police. When authorities wished to punish fishermen who refused to relinquish their land to the collective farm or work in the collective, they talked to A.C., who would find "compromise" solutions for the Lipoveni's "accommodation" to the social order of the new regime.

Another potential influence in the village were the Soviet troops stationed on its perimeter in the aftermath of the war. Searching for instances of ethnic solidarity between Lipoveni and the Soviet soldiers that might bear on their ideological conversion, I found evidence only of sympathy towards the Soviets, especially among the educated strata of the population (such as priests and schoolmasters). Yet there were no explicit manifestations of ethnic solidarity. One interviewee (B.L.) said he respects Russia, "its great people, its huge land, its many military victories." Yet B.L. also suggested that the religiosity of the Lipoveni was a brake on warmer relations with the Soviets. He insisted that the Soviet army in the village did not have anything to do with the course of collectivization:

> They [the Soviets] did not interfere with anything. Let me put it this way: it is our government that stuck its nose into everything. The fish rots from head to tail, not vice versa. The head is there, up in Bucharest. We, down here, we represent nothing, we have no power at all. That's the way it is…[73]

The Lipoveni's intense religiosity contributed to their resistance to ideological conversion, especially as the state stepped up its efforts to discourage religious practices. Yet the Soviet presence certainly stimulated the emigration of many Lipoveni to the USSR. In 1947, 220 Lipoveni families, having between two and seven members each, made the decision to emigrate.[74] Their departure affected the demographic status quo and influenced the political climate in Jurilovca. Two years earlier, on June 26, 1945, the sub-prefect of Tulcea, Augustin Dugăeşescu, wrote in his diary that in Jurilovca, "those who signed up for departure to the USSR fire their weapons in the air, insult and gratuitously threaten those who decided to stay."[75]

3.3. Collectivization in Jurilovca

One can distinguish between two main stages of collectivization in Jurilovca: 1950–1952 and 1956–1957, with a period of stagnation in between. The Jurilovca collective farm (GAC) was established by a group of Party activists who lived in the village.[76] They called for a meeting of the entire village in order to formally establish the GAC, yet only twenty poor families, owning together at most 20 ha of land, 11 horses and a few farm tools, actually answered the call. To encourage middle farmers to join, the authorities tried to lure respected figures like B.L., the son of a priest, who was a photographer and watchmaker and was later elected priest by the community for his exemplary moral standing. B.L. turned them down by producing documents that attested that he had no land:

> They called on me to join the association and then the GAC. I remember someone saying to the mayor about me: "I swear I'll make him sign up!" Despite this, I did not argue with them. I only said: "Why should I join when I have no land? Why should I sign up?" To this, they replied: "But if you had land, would you have joined." "No," I said, "I still wouldn't have joined!"[77]

Faced with the refusal of middle peasants to join, the authorities moved to divide the community by introducing the principle of "class struggle" and the removal of "reactionary" peasants (*chiaburi*). Everything was supervised by central Party authorities and was planned in the greatest detail. Party correspondence describes the specific responsibilities of each category of party cadres and individual administration employee.[78] For example, an October 17, 1952 cable from the People's Council of District Istria Babadag (Agricultural Department) to the People's Council of the village of Jurilovca asked the latter to "make sure that the *chiaburi* deliver the exact seed quotas per hectare stipulated for your region." On December 3, 1953, the same organization demanded firm steps be taken for the payment of overdue taxes and requisitions, with special mention being made for each category of farmers (employees, collective farm members, and *chiaburi*). The *chiaburi* were singled out in the following order: "They are to be called to the People's Council and told individually that they are to pay their dues in three days at the latest." Party activists dispatched to the village to support the requisition of quotas were to be hosted only by "honest" peasants in exchange for rent, and the chairman of the People's Council was ordered to keep abreast of developments in the quota collections campaign.

3.4. Making chiaburi *in Jurilovca*

Following orders from the Istria district leadership, a commission was set up in Jurilovca with the purpose of classifying the local *chiaburi*. Its members were Ghinea Sava, Filip Achimiv (chairman of the primary Party organization), Dumitru Bold, Pârvu Chiriță, Valil Filap (secretary of the RWP Razelm-Jurilovca) and Vasile Beloiu (chairman of the Jurilovca People's Council). On September 23, 1952, the commission employed thirteen "farmhands, shepherds and poor peasants," all of whom, say the commission minutes of that day, had "feelings of attachment to our regime."[79] While classifying people as *chiaburi*, the Jurilovca commission knew that the final decision lay with the Party's district committee.

The proceedings of the commission were duly recorded, and they allow the reader to discern how the criteria for selecting *chiaburi* were devised and enforced.[80] The commission assessed the wealth of suspected *chiaburi* at three time periods (1937–1945, 1946–1950 and 1951–1952). In line with the Leninist definition of the *kulak* assumed by the Party, the main criterion of classification was not the amount of the land owned, but rather the number of farmhands hired and the regularity of their employment. Therefore, wealthy peasants who did not hire farmhands got off the hook, despite their evident prosperity. Examples include Jurilovca villagers who owned nine hectares of land, two horses, one wagon, a wheat-

threshing machine and lots of farm equipment, or others who owned fourteen hectares of arable land, two oxen and six sheep.[81] A middle farmer who owned ten hectares of land and ten sheep and used a farmhand for three months in 1946 and 1947 was not declared a *chiabur* because the use of hired labor was not judged consistent enough in his case.[82] If, however, a peasant was employing farmhands at the time of the commission's work, that peasant was automatically declared a *chiabur*, irrespective of his record of consistency in this respect. So were the offspring of these *chiaburi*, regardless of whether they had hired labor.

Thus, a peasant owning just six hectares of land was declared a *chiabur* because he hired a farmhand for 150 days per year,[83] as was another who owned fifteen hectares and used hired labor for sixty days per year.[84] The definition of "farmhand" was also expanded to include household help, shepherds and even various forms of work exchange (as with a forester who exchanged horse-drawn plowing for another villager's help with harvesting).[85] Anyone who gave out land in sharecropping could also be declared *chiabur,* even if the amount given out was not very large.[86] A peasant from the village of *6 Martie* ("6th of March," celebrating the day of the communist take-over in Romania) was declared a *chiabur* despite his paltry five hectares of land because, during his employment as a policeman and forester, he hired Bulgarian migrants who sharecropped some of his land. Finally, the classification of *chiabur* was politically motivated, with commission members deciding borderline cases on the basis of their political affiliation, which could make them "a dangerous element who struggles against the current regime."[87]

Merely owning mechanized farm equipment would not make one a *chiabur*, even though in most cases the equipment was regularly rented out to other villagers. Equipment was only a problem if it was operated by hired labor.[88] At the same time, widows, generally compelled to hire farmhands, were not exempt, even when they employed only one person. In a borderline case, a widow who no longer hired farmhands was nevertheless declared a *chiabur* because she was suspected of being an "enemy element who struggles against the GAC."[89] My archival work reveals that the commission was flagrantly inconsistent in its application of these criteria. For example, a widow who owned ten hectares of land, a pub, and three horses, had hired a farmhand and rented out land until 1945, was not classified as a *chiabur*.[90] Another peasant who owned twenty hectares and never hired farmhands was, on the other hand, considered a *chiabur*.[91]

Declaring peasants *chiaburi* and then demonizing them was the Party's interpretation of the "class struggle." Yet this propaganda campaign failed because all people interviewed declared their conviction that Jurilovca had no genuine *chiaburi*, only *chiaburi* "manufactured" by the authorities. Here is a sample:

> C.A.: *Chiaburi*? Is this a joke? The party appointed some thugs to name people *chiaburi*. Those were the times. If they saw a man with six children to feed and six hectares of land and they thought he was making propaganda against people's signing up for the GAC, they pinned him down by calling him a *chiabur*.[92]

> C.B.: They called a lot of people *chiaburi*. Yet, a *chiabur* was somebody who owned one hundred, maybe two hundred hectares. We had none of those here.
> C.A.: As far as I know we only had middle peasants.[93]

Another interviewee (V.Z.) underlines the political bias of the commission and the social role of the *chiaburi*, who were not perceived as exploiters by the villagers but as work partners:

> When communism came they made a couple of classifications of social categories. Some of them were labeled *chiaburi*. Some fell in this category by mistake, some did not. I know a bunch of old men around here, my neighbors, who were called *chiaburi*. One had two hectares of vineyard, two horses and a small fishing business that hired people, including my father. They called him a *chiabur*. Another old man over there used to have two hectares of land, a tiny brandy distillery and a windmill. He was also called a *chiabur*. Both these men made very little money. They were quite poor in fact. We were happy they gave us work. Without them it would have been worse.[94]

The villagers responded to the Party's strategy of breaking up village solidarity and demonizing the *chiaburi* by symbolically reintegrating the victims as simple peasants like themselves.[95] By contrast, villagers labeled those who helped the regime in this manufactured class struggle "hoodlums" and "lazybones," and socially marginalized them.

3.5. Total collectivization: mechanisms of coercion

> If a family splits up as you watch you feel pity. Imagine how you would feel when an entire village goes through a similar experience…[96]

As in other Dobrogean regions, collectivization was completed through an unprecedented and forceful mobilization by the authorities in the fall of 1957. The key actors were the GAC chairman, party organs and local authorities. The main perpetrators were activists from Jurilovca and from neighboring districts, who were supervised and supported by the regional authorities, headed by the regional Party Secretary Vasile Vâlcu. Villagers remember him as visiting Jurilovca several times in the fall of 1957 with mobilizing advice such as "Give the *chiaburi* no time to breathe, break them down, all the way down."

The testimony of M.T., the third GAC chairman, illustrates the coercive techniques used in Jurilovca during that time.[97] M.T. was the secretary of the local Party organization and a close collaborator of the GAC chairman. Given his strong commitment to the Party, M.T. organized the meetings for the thirty local activists in his own house. Along with the local mayor, he set up four to five "persuasion teams" of about five to ten men (the number deemed sufficient for physical

intimidation), who roamed the village to compel peasants to sign up. The teams operated in shifts that changed every three or four days. To enhance the intimidating power of these teams, the mayor bolstered them with poor peasants from neighboring villages, whom Jurilovcans came to dub "lazybones." These teams proceeded with illegal confiscations of animals, harvests and farm equipment. They even used weapons, provided by the Party, against those judged to be "diehards." Gradually, these teams got out of control and began committing robberies and other abuses, which my interviewees insisted on narrating in detail.

Faced with this violent campaign, a minority of peasants gave in and signed up for GAC membership. But most of them opted for various means of resistance, such as hiding in the Delta, often with their entire family, spreading anti-collectivization rumors (after collectivization, one rumor went, the whole village would be reduced to eating together from a single cauldron, as was the case in the USSR) or even violently resisting. Those in hiding were hunted down by the recruitment teams and brought to the town hall to sign up. Inhuman treatment and tortures, such as beating, strangulation, and sticking a pen up a person's nostrils, are widely remembered by interviewees. The diehards were then imprisoned in the town hall basement or, as with seventeen of them, taken into the fields and beaten senseless.

The violence pitted peasants against the local Party activists and their sympathizers. M.T. himself was accused of opportunism and deliberately dividing the village. M.T. would usually reply that "collectivization is the only way ahead," and that "I am not confiscating horses and wagons for my own use but for the collective… I am doing what the state tells me to do… we must complete collectivization. It says so everywhere you go. What are we waiting for?"[98] When faced with evidence of abuses he would acknowledge them and blame it all on the higher authorities and their teams of activists. It was they, he would say, who were the decision-makers, not the local authorities. As evidence he would quote the Party's orders that he go and persuade his relatives first, which caused him trouble in the family.

Blaming the upper Party echelons was one strategy of avoiding responsibility for collectivization; denying any meaningful involvement in the persuasion work was another one. One commission member (V.Z.) saw his role as one of "representative" for the village, with no agency for himself:

> V.Z.: I was indeed in that commission. These men from outside the village came in and took us with them. I had a salary [to lose], what could I do? They took us with them around the village to tell them who lived where and said we represented the village.
> C.I.: Did you do any talking?
> V.Z.: No, no way, only the others did. I wouldn't know what to say. Who was I to say anything in the first place? You think I had the guts to talk to our people? How can I tell a bloke who owns land to relinquish it when I come from a family that has never ever owned any land? How can I tell that man:

> Come on, sign up? I had no idea what was good or wrong. I was a young, ignorant lad back then.[99]

In the long run, this massive deployment of coercion worked. By the end of the fall, almost all arable land became the property of the collective farm, thereby increasing its surface area almost seven-fold. The violence of the campaign left a significant mark on villagers' memories, who associate collectivization with the fall of 1957 and say nothing about the earlier collectivization campaigns. One interviewee remembers:

> It was then, in '57, that collectivization was completed. They pushed hard enough until they got everyone in and they did that to all villages. That includes even those who didn't write a petition. The authorities did it for them.[100]

Collectivization deeply affected village social life and the structure of the village economy by enhancing peasant dependence on the state and by toppling existing social hierarchies. Peasant households lost their means of existence and were forced to collaborate with authorities. As M.T. put it:

> People had to forsake their land, whether they agreed or not. They [the communists] took everything and then they sent tractors to plow the land. Whether people agreed or not, they ended up going back to work in the field. What else could they do? When they saw that land was no longer theirs, that their vineyard, their horses and their wagons now belonged to the collective farm, what could they do but start working there?[101]

Even though most villagers did not respond to the principle of "class struggle," they nevertheless reacted vehemently to the leveling of social distinctions via the confiscation of land and the implements for working it. Some demanded that their status be acknowledged—their age, or their having brought more land into the collective farm:

> C.A.: You know, I think those who brought property to the GAC suffered more than those who brought nothing and at the end of the day we all received the same income.
> C.I.: Do you know of any quarrels between those who brought property and those who brought nothing?
> C.A.: Only women, you know them… For instance, there was this woman whose brandy distillery was taken to the GAC courtyard, and when she was in the field hoeing with other women she would lash out at those who brought nothing and would say things like: "You, you brought nothing to the GAC, whereas I gave them the distillery, my horse, everything!"[102]

To avoid these social conflicts, as well as the possibility that peasants might recognize their cattle and tools in the GAC and deny others the right to use them, the authorities exchanged their GAC's cattle and movable property for those of the neighboring village. To counter the villagers' personalization of social relations and their emotional identification with their lost property, the officials responded with practices of segregation and depersonalization of property relations.

> M.T.: They mixed property up a lot. They moved things around from place to place so that people wouldn't be upset to see their old stuff. My mother-in-law would have fits when she saw her horse and wagon used by the GAC. She had a very nice horse… Eventually they took the horse and the wagon to another village and exchanged them, you see…[103]

The economic effects of collectivization were contradictory. On the one hand, it helped to diversify the village economy, as fishermen continued their traditional activities as state employees, with all the benefits derived from this status, such as pensions, welfare, and education prospects. Family incomes grew because their wives now worked for the GAC and therefore brought extra money and products into the family budget. For this reason, the years of state socialism left some positive memories, especially among the Lipoveni women. They assess collectivization by looking not only at its early years but also at the economically harsh post-communist years. As one woman from Jurilovca put it:

> I was afraid of collectivization at the beginning, but after I got used to it, it was very good, you know. They gave us a lot of wheat and corn and all sorts of other things. We had pigs in the stable. Now we have nothing.[104]

On the other hand, however, being a state employee meant more vulnerability to administrative pressure and the loss of one's independence in the organization of work. The state exerted firm control on fishing methods: the labor force was dramatically reorganized, older fishermen were forced into retirement and family fishing teams were replaced with so called "fishing brigades" which the state kept on a tight leash. Prohibition on alcohol was imposed even during the cold wintertime and poaching was severely punished. Most importantly, fishermen felt heavily exploited, as the state paid them only for 10 to 20 percent of the harvested fish, whereas in the interwar years the *cherhanale* used to pay them up to 50 percent.

Officials used state control over labor to turn Jurilovca's predominantly fishing economy into a predominantly agricultural economy. The strategy did not work. Jurilovca's land quality ranged from bad to mediocre and villagers had no solid farming traditions. Consequently, the GAC was an economic failure. The village's prosperity during the communist period was not based on farming, but on fishing and employment in the construction sector of socialism's huge building sites. Having lost their land, many villagers also went for higher education and migrated to cities.

Although economically unproductive, collectivization and nationalization enabled the state to penetrate the community and enforce secularization. Authorities discouraged religious life and deterred the Lipoveni from continuing with their traditional lifestyles, even forcing them to cut their long hair and beards. Ultimately, the communist modernizing project turned Jurilovca from a closed, monolingual, and religiously segregated community into a semi-open one, characterized by bilingualism, internal migration and mixed marriages unconditioned by conversion to old rite Christian Orthodoxy.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In a pioneering article on the mechanisms of institutionalizing communist regimes in Eastern Europe, Jan T. Gross argued that the communist take-over cannot be fully understood without attending to the domestic factors that facilitated it. These include the isolation and statization of the eastern economies during World War II; the weakening of the society's ability to resist owing to prolonged economic crisis, deportations and population exchanges; and to the war effort and political collaboration with occupying forces.[105] Gross' article opened a new research agenda focusing on the social history of World War II in East-Central Europe and its subsequent impact on communization. Employing a similar perspective, this paper shows that the collectivization campaign in Dobrogea was shaped by the interaction of long-term social and demographic structures, the socio-political effects of war, and the Romanian national context. I argue that collectivization's outcome in Dobrogea can be understood only by taking into account the province's social, economic, demographic and cultural experience with the Romanian state, the interplay between communist repression and anti-communist armed struggle, and the strategies used by local leaders to collectivize.

Dobrogea displayed peculiar characteristics as compared to other Romanian regions: it had a marked multi-ethnic character, was exposed to waves of state-organized colonization to increase the ethnic Romanian presence and experienced a subordinate administrative status between 1878 and 1913. Its ethnic composition was strongly affected by the Romanian–Bulgarian and Romanian–German population exchanges of 1940, and by the Lipoveni emigration to the USSR in the early postwar years.

At the onset of collectivization, the economy of the small Dobrogean households was marked by low productivity, owing to the scarcity of farming tools and equipment and the 1945–1946 drought. Consequently, peasants felt compelled to form associations to work the land more effectively. The expropriation of great estates by the new communist regime further weakened the inherited social structure of the province, as farm laborers who had worked for large landlords were left without income and turned into protest groups that could be easily manipulated by the new regime. Furthermore, the fact that the Romanian state inher-

ited vast expanses of arable land from the Ottoman Empire expanded during the agrarian reform of 1945, facilitated the early consolidation of the socialist sector in the region's agriculture, a development that increased pressure on privately-owned farms and further limited market competition.

The armed anticommunist resistance in Dobrogea (1948–1952) led to increased political repression throughout the province. As an important Iron Guard stronghold (with 9,446 members in Constanța and 1,995 in Tulcea), the province was an important target of the communists' defascization campaigns. Waves of political purges consolidated the role of the Party. Armed confrontations between authorities and anticommunist partisans caused a high degree of mobilization among communist elites and fueled the zeal with which the Party wrought its socio-political changes throughout the province.[106] As in other historical provinces of Romania (see Gail Kligman's study of Maramureş), there was a strong correlation between the intensity of anti-communist resistance movements and the state-organized violence that accompanied collectivization.

The fast pace of collectivization in Dobrogea at the beginning of the 1950s drew the attention of Bucharest authorities who realized that, given the small size of the province, they could turn Dobrogea into a showcase for collectivization. Consequently, the central government provided Dobrogean authorities with special political, organizational and financial support to launch the unprecedented 1956–1957 campaign that succeeded in making Dobrogea the first completely collectivized historical province of Romania.

The strong Soviet military presence and geo-political interests in Dobrogea prompted the province's rapid Sovietization. In 1959, when collectivization was complete, Nikita Khrushchev visited Dobrogea to inspect the results of socialist agriculture. For the occasion, the Party published a propaganda album celebrating the development of the province during its fifteen postwar years. The album showed representatives of Dobrogea's local government being awarded "The Star of the Romanian People's Republic," First Class, a special decoration issued by the Great National Assembly.[107]

The "Dobrogean collectivization model" thus appears as a contingent combination of Soviet geo-political interests and involvement on national and local variables. The increased availability of Dobrogean peasants to join collective farms and the very early successes of large scale collectivization in the province were the most consequential local specificities, facilitating the province's drive toward full collectivization. As in the rest of the country, full collectivization could be achieved only through the large-scale use of physical and psychological violence. These successes in collectivization were highly exaggerated by the propaganda machine, which deliberately transformed Dobrogea into the cornerstone of Romania's socialist agriculture.

4.1. Dobrogea transformed: socialist agriculture and national collectivization propaganda, 1957–1964

Once collectivization was completed, authorities focused on the planned development of Dobrogean agriculture. On March 14, 1958, the Regional Party Committee and the Regional People's Council made their bold development plan for the 1958–1960 period public. The plan aimed at turning Dobrogea into an agricultural powerhouse, and at improving the social plight of its inhabitants by handing out long-term credits for building homes and farms. The plan was reconfirmed by Party General Secretary Gheorghiu-Dej himself during the RWP meeting in Constanța (April 3–6, 1958). Gheorghiu-Dej committed the government to allocate substantial state resources for Dobrogean agriculture to achieve eighty to ninety percent mechanization.

The publication of the plan was accompanied by a strong propaganda campaign to prove the superiority of socialist agriculture and the fast pace of modernization it entailed. The tone and main arguments of this propaganda were provided by Gheorghiu-Dej who, during the Constanța meeting highlighted, on several pages suggestively entitled "Great Changes in the Life of Dobrogean Villages," the huge contrast between the "dark and poor" old Dobrogea and the highly prosperous new Dobrogea, allegedly already visible after only a half-year since the campaign ended.[108] The propaganda campaign in the communist press relentlessly continued along these lines until 1964. It made use of a vast array of techniques, the most important among which were the drawing of sharp contrasts between the former gloomy capitalist order and the shiny socialist reality, and the utopianization of Dobrogea's socialist future.

The most frequent references were made to spectacular gains in collectivized peasants' standard of living. It was claimed that, by 1961, 33,000 collectivized peasants were living in new or renovated homes, 25,000 of them owned radios and were purchasing consumer goods associated with urban life (such as gas stoves, furniture and bicycles).[109] The propaganda effort continued through 1962 and 1963, and saw a last outburst in 1964, on the occasion of the review of the seven-year plan.[110]

Although triumphantly celebrated by official propaganda, it is safe to conclude that, in the long term, the plan for socialist modernization of Dobrogea largely failed. Between the lines, the state propaganda itself hinted at this by publishing stories of shortages and organizational inefficiency. Even though agricultural output increased to high levels that earned Dobrogea the reputation of being one of Romania's most important granaries,[111] the results remained nevertheless not only below expectations, but below the level of state investments. Given the gap between image and reality, the official press soon abandoned the theme of Dobrogea's technological advance. Once its role as propaganda showcase was no longer required, the province returned to its traditional semi-peripheral economic and political position.

Modernization plans resumed with vigor under the rule of Nicolae Ceauşescu (1965–1989), when Romania embarked on a program of economic autarchy in

order to consolidate its political autonomy from Moscow. In the 1980s, Dobrogea served yet again as a pilot project in communist modernization, which was also meant to reaffirm Romania's strong grip on the province and to counter the rumours of a possible Soviet annexation. Dobrogea hosted numerous large-scale economic projects, such as new industrial units and port facilities in Constanța, Midia, Năvodari and Mangalia, the Cernavodă nuclear power plant, and the previously abandoned Danube–Black Sea Canal, completed in 1984 at a huge cost evaluated at about two billion dollars. The Ceauşescu regime also invested in mechanized agriculture and organized an intensive "rational economic exploitation" of Danube Delta resources, with dramatic environmental consequences. While the economic benefits of these projects remain limited, the multi-ethnic outlook of the province and its traditional sectors, such as farming and animal husbandry, have been further flattened by industrialization, labor colonization and state-developed agriculture. Today, its fishing communities still exist, but only in adulterated forms. With over ninety percent of the population ethnic Romanian, Dobrogea's "ethnic Babylon" is but a fading memory.

NOTES

1 *Scînteia*, May 23, 1957, 1
2 *Scînteia*, June 28, 1957, 1.
3 *Scînteia*, July 5, 1957, 1.
4 The raion was an administrative unit lying between the county (or region) and the commune. See the Glossary of Terms.
5 *Munca*, Year XIII, no. 3140, October 20, 1957. Official figures for the number of existing GAC farms and the extent of collectivization varied from one propaganda bureau to another. While *Scînteia* reported collectivization completed in October 1957, S. Hartia and M. Dulea asserted that "at the end of 1957, collectivization in Constanța was broadly complete." (*Constanța, prima regiune colectivizată*, Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1960, 115).
6 *Scînteia*, October 19, 1957. 1.
7 See S. Sharatia, O. Gheorgiu, "Din experiența cooperativizării agriculturii în regiunea Constanța," *Probleme Economice*, 6, 1956.
8 See "Ritmul constănțean," *Scînteia*, September 23, 1957; "Ieri în regiunea Constanța s-a terminat colectivizarea agriculturii," *Scînteia*, October 20, 1957.
9 Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole şi cuvînări, 1955–1959* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1959), 374.
10 Hartia and Dulea, *Constanța*, 15.
11 For a comprehensive analysis on the integration of Dobrogea into Romania, see Constantin Iordachi, *Citizenship, Nation and State-Building: The Integration of Northern Dobrogea in Romania, 1878–1913* (Carl Back Papers in Russian and East European Studies, no. 1607, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).
12 For the concept of "internal America" see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II,* 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972–1973).

13 Iordachi, *Citizenship, Nation and State-Building,* 7–10.
14 Ali M. Ekrem, *Din istoria turcilor dobrogeni* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1994), 126–131.
15 Dorel Bancoş, *Social şi național în politica guvernului Ion Antonescu* (Bucharest: Eminescu, 2000), 111–114.
16 Bancoş, *Social şi național*, 93–97.
17 Bancoş, *Social şi național*, 97.
18 The Iscaccea-Babadag raion had the highest concentration of refugees from Southern Dobrogea. Yet, despite the precarious economic situation of these refugees, it was the Harsova raion and not the Iscaccea-Babadag raion that was the first to be collectivized.
19 *Direcția Centrală de Statistică, Anuarul statistic al RPR 1959* (Bucharest, 1959), 73.
20 *Anuarul statistic al RPR, 1959*, 68–69.
21 *Anuarul statistic al RPR 1959*, 67.
22 Constantin Rotaru, *Reformele agrare din Dobrogea veche (1878–1930)* (Iaşi: 1930), 91.
23 Dumitru Şandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945 în România* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000).
24 *Tulcea. Monografie* (Bucharest: Sport-Turism, 1980), 58, cited in Marian Cojoc, *Dobrogea de la reforma agrară la colectivizarea forțată* (Constanța: Muntenia şi Leda, 2001), 53.
25 See David T. Cattell, "The Politics of the Danube Commission under Soviet Control," *American Slavic and East European Review*, 19 (Oct., 1960) 3, 380–394.
26 Adrian Rădulescu and Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei* (Constanța: Ex Ponto, 1998), 451.
27 Cattell, "The Politics of the Danube Commission under Soviet Control," 380–394.
28 These visits were amply mediatized by the authorities. See, for example "Stenograma consfătuirilor care au avut loc la Gospodăriile Agricole Colective, S.M.T. şi G.A.S. din Regiunea Constanța, cu ocazia vizitei delegației guvernamentale sovietice între 18–24 iulie 1952," ANIC, fond "CC al PCR–Secția Agrară," file no. 60/1952, ff. 1–109.
29 Nicolas Spulber, "The Danube–Black Sea Canal and the Russian Control over the Danube," *Economic Geography*, 30 (Jul., 1954) 3, 236–245.
30 Marian Cojoc, "Despre unele minorități din Dobrogea, 1944–1948. Ruso-lipovenii (I)," *Arhivele Totalitarismului* 19–20 (1998) 2–3, 27; Dumitru Şandru, "Plecarea minoritarilor slavi şi armeni din România în U.R.S.S., 1944–1948," *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, 31–31 (2001) 1–2, 38–45.
31 DJAN Constanța, fond "Legiunea de Jandarmi Tulcea," file 23; Cojoc, "Despre unele minorități," 28. Rădulescu and Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, 457, claim that the NKVD recruited personnel from the Russian speaking population during the war.
32 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 161.
33 OSA, RL 2966/1959, Persecutions, Illegal Arrests, Deportations. Source "Athens, 68 years old Greek-Romanian Refugee-Epatriate Merchant," 2.
34 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 161–162.
35 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 161–162.
36 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 166.
37 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 162, 167.
38 Hartia and Dulea, *Constanța*, 125.
39 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 162.
40 OSA, Rl 2632/1959, "The Rumanian Workers Party, Finance, Cadres, Education, 25 June 1958," 3. The interviewee voiced a number of stereotypes that are also deeply entrenched in Romanian historiography. For example, Rădulescu and Bitoleanu, *Istoria*

Dobrogei, 459–460, charge the Muslim, Armenian and Jewish minorities with being overtly cooperative with the communists.

41 "Stenograma şedinței Biroului organizatoric al CC al PMR din 5 aprilie 1952," in Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 288–289.
42 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 291.
43 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 303.
44 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 299.
45 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 95.
46 Moraru, "Agricultura dobrogeană," 302.
47 Moraru, "Agricultura dobrogeană," 303.
48 Direcția regională de statistică Constanța, *Anuarul statistic al regiunii Constanța*, 1960, 61.
49 *România liberă,* April 20, 1954, 1; Hartia and Dulea, *Constanța*, 97.
50 OSA, "The Rumanian Workers Party Finance, Cadres, Education, 25 June 1958," 4.
51 See the plan in ANIC, fond "CC al PCR-Secția agrară," file 9/1956.
52 ANIC, fond "CC al PCR-Secția agrară," file 9/1956, 4.
53 *Dobrogea nouă*, February 10–12, 1956.
54 OSA, RL 2268/1959 "Special Techniques for Obtaining Peasant Signature to Join Collective Farms as Reported by the RFE," 5.
55 OSA, RL 2569/58, "Constanta: Difficulties of Peasant Life," 8.
56 Cintilean Bărbuleanu, *Monografia oraşului Babadag*, 2nd ed., (Bucharest: Charme-Scott, 1998), 175–176.
57 OSA, RL1270/1959, *Fate of Constanța personalities*, 1.
58 The Jurilovca commune incorporates three villages: Jurilovca (called "Unirea" during communism), Sălcioara ("6 Martie" during communism), Vişina ("Paşa Câşla" before 1945). Unlike in the village of Jurilovca, in Vişina and Sălcioara the Russian-speaking population is insignificant.
59 Andrei Echim, *Condiția populației din Rezerva Biosferei Delta Dunării* (Bucharest: Lex, 1995); Ionescu, *Dobrogea*, 374.
60 Echim, *Condiția populației*, 33.
61 Ipatiov, *Ruşii-lipoveni*, 34. At the moment of writing, Jurilovca has 1,341 ha of arable land and 3,158 inhabitants, of which 85.8 percent are Russian Old Believers; there are also 438 Romanians, 8 Ukrainians and 3 Macedonians.
62 I conducted most of these interviews in the summer of 2001, together with Ştefan Dorondel. The interviews we conducted together will be cited as C.I and S.D., and those that I conducted alone will henceforth be cited as C.I.
63 Ipatiov, *Ruşii-lipoveni*, 34.
64 Ipatiov, *Ruşii-lipoveni*, 16–19.
65 Ipatiov, *Ruşii-lipoveni*, 19.
66 Ipatiov, *Ruşii-lipoveni*, 40.
67 Ipatiov, *Ruşii-lipoveni*, 43.
68 E. Dunn, and S. P. Dunn. "Religion as an Instrument of Culture Change: The Problem of the Sects in the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review,* 23 (September 1964) 3, 459.
69 Priest B.L. compared favorably the Ottoman administration to the Romanian one, pointing out that, upon their annexation of the province, Romanian authorities increased the state bureaucracy at the local level and introduced new taxes into the village community, such as the one on foresting. (S.D. and C.I, interview with B.L., born in 1925, poor peasant, priest, summer 2001).

70 S.D. and C.I., interview with C.B., born in 1940, fisherman wife, former GAC worker, August 8, 2001.
71 Although there were no major frictions between Lipoveni and the Romanian veterans, the Lipoveni were very proud of being the village founders, the men who clear-cut the forest to make room for the village. The Lipoveni also thought that the Romanian state brought the veterans to usurp the title of village founders from the Lipoveni and to Romanianize the area.
72 This information was obtained from fifteen interviews with fishermen from Jurilovca and trade union employees, recorded in 1970.
73 S.D. and C.I., summer 2001 interview with B.L., priest born in 1925.
74 Arhiva Comunei Jurilovca (Jurilovca Village Archive, AJC), file on villagers who departed for USSR, dated 1947.
75 DJAN Tulcea, Fond "Prefetura Tulcea," file no. 1340/1945, 5, apud Cojoc, "Despre unele minorităţi din Dobrogea," 9.
76 ACJ, file 11/1952, "File cuprinzând declaraţii de înscriere în CAP (Proces-verbal semnat de constituirea GAC)," 1952.
77 Interview with B.L., summer 2001.
78 ACJ, file 20/1952, "Corespondenţă şi dispoziţii cu caracter agricol."
79 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 26.
80 ACJ,file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 141.
81 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 12, 116.
82 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 10.
83 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 2.
84 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 3.
85 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 8.
86 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 12, 20.
87 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 11.
88 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 6, 22.
89 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 23.
90 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 1.
91 ACJ, file 12/1952–1954, "Cheaburi 1952–1954. Dispoziţii şi circulare," 17.
92 Interview with M.T., born in 1927, poor peasant, former GAC chairman, summer 2001.
93 Interview with C.A., female, born in 1935, fisherman's wife, former GAC worker; Interview with C.B., born in 1940, fisherman's wife, former GAC worker, summer 2001.
94 S.D. and C.I., interview with V.Z., born in 1933, son of landless fisherman, former tractor driver and GAC chairman between 1970 and 1980, summer 2001.
95 For further elaboration on the social (de)contextualization of *chiaburi,* see the chapter by Verdery in this volume.
96 Interview with M.T., former tractor driver from Ceamurlia de Jos between 1949 and 1950, summer 2001.
97 Interview with M.T.
98 Interview with M.T.
99 Interview with V.Z.
100 Interview with C.A.
101 Interview with M.T.
102 Interview with C.A.
103 Interview with C.B.

104 C.I., interview with L.B., woman, former GAC worker, widow, summer 2001.
105 Jan T. Gross, "The Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries for the Study of the Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe," *East European Politics and Societies,* 3 (1989), 198-214.
106 Rădulescu and Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, 459.
107 See *Album. 15 ani de viață nouă în regiunea Constanța, 1944–1959* (Constanța, 1959).
108 Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole şi cuvînări*, mostly 373–382.
109 OSA, Romanian Monitoring, Bucharest I, February 8, 1961, 20 h.
110 *Scînteia*, April 29, 1962, 1; *Viața Economică*, 19, (May 8, 1964), 2.
111 Rădulescu and Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, 459.

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The Role of Ethnicity in the Collectivization of Tomnatic/Triebswetter (Banat Region) (1949–1956)

SMARANDA VULTUR

"One, two, three, four / Throw the *chiabur* in the hole"

Familiar slogan of the collectivization era that the author heard repeated by many of the persons interviewed.

Any cross-regional analysis of collectivization in Romania ought to be concerned with the impact of local specificities on the strategies employed by the Party, as well as on the timing and pace of collectivization. Ecological, socioeconomic, and historical particulars left their mark on the way the "socialist transformation of agriculture" was carried out. This was especially true of the historical province of the Banat, which, at the time of collectivization, was a region of rich ethnic diversity. The same conclusions hold for other regions of Romania with similar characteristics (see the chapters by Iordachi and Goina in this volume).

This article analyzes the case of the Banat commune of Tomnatic (Triebswetter, in German), currently located in Timiş county. I have chosen Tomnatic because it is a representative case for an ethnic German (Swabian) village community from the Western Banat Plains. The history of Banat's Germans is interesting because this group was exposed to particularly intense repression by the Romanian government after 1945. In January of that year, Romania's Germans faced large-scale expropriations and deportations to the USSR, whence about half of them returned in the late 1940s. In June 1951, along with thousands of ethnic Romanians from the Romanian–Yugoslav border areas, many ethnic Germans were also deported from the Banat to the Great Romanian Plains, in Bărăgan. My study looks at how political and ethnic aspects of collectivization are intertwined with variables such as demographic dynamics and the constitution and operation of new local administrative and political structures. It attempts to isolate the long-term effects of collectivization on the community of Tomnatic. To do so, I triangulated findings by using both archival documents authored by Party and state officials and interview data.[1] This enabled me to compare the official discourse about collectivization with the direct testimonies of individuals subject to it.

Tomnatic is situated in the county of Timiş and is 10 km from the town of Sânnicolau Mare. Until 1968, Tomnatic had the administrative status of a commune and belonged to the Sânnicolau Mare district. After 1968, it was downgraded to

the status of village and integrated into the commune of Lovrin. The settlement was established in 1772 at the initiative of Habsburg authorities, to colonize the area with French and German speaking immigrants from Lorraine, Alsace and Luxembourg. If, in the beginning, over 90 percent of the population belonged to these three groups and spoke French and German, at present Germans represent less than 10 percent of the population.

Before 1945, Germans represented over 95 percent of the village population. The population of colonists had been almost entirely Germanized by the end of the 19th century, yet the memory of French identity endures today and has been the object of many demographic and linguistic studies.[2] The possibility to shift back and forth between German and French ethnic identities became politically relevant during collectivization. Until the end of World War II endogamy was the norm, and the end of the war brought about significant demographic changes (for comparative perspectives on this point, see Iordachi and Goina in this volume).

On August 13, 1950, the regime forced the establishment of GAC "December the 30th" in Tomnatic.[3] Throughout the entire Banat region, coercion was used to establish new GACs. However, it needs to be emphasized that, in the case of the German speaking peasantry, the transfer of their property and agricultural inventory occurred in very special circumstances that I will discuss below, focusing on three main analytical dimensions: demography, class struggle, and the symbolic division of the village community into "us" versus "them."

1. DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS AND COLLECTIVIZATION

The village archive of Tomnatic contains a wealth of demographic information collected for the purposes of requisition quotas, lists of *chiaburi*, and collectivization. Archival documents also make reference to the policies through which administrative power was gradually conflated with the Stalinist one-party system. A comparative analysis of census data in the village archives requires us to answer two key questions: Why does the French-speaking population appear and then disappear at certain intervals? How can one explain why the ratio between Romanian-speakers and German-speakers changes significantly in the aftermath of World War II?

The 1930 census did not mention any French-speaking individuals among the 3,416 inhabitants of Tomnatic. Nonetheless, in 1928, records indicate that out of 3,402 inhabitants, 1,682 were Swabians, 1,274 were French-speaking and the remaining few were registered as Romanians (181), Hungarians (141), "Yugoslavs" (16), "Czechoslovaks" (12), Bulgarians and Russians.[4] In 1941, Nicolae Wolf, the village mayor, mentioned in his records that out of the 3,357 inhabitants of Tomnatic, 2,835 were recorded as German, 217 as Romanian, 147 as Hungarian and 158 as "other nationalities."[5] These figures suggest that the French-speaking and Swabian-German villagers were all recorded as German speakers. We see something similar in the 1930 census, possibly because what mattered was that these

populations spoke German. Undoubtedly, the looming war in 1941 and the strong political pressure exercised by the German-speaking group explain these culturally homogenizing efforts.

The 1941 census data can also be used as a benchmark for comparing how the property regime would evolve after 1945. Thus, in 1941 villagers owned a total of 3,576 ha of land, of which 2,544 ha were arable, 629 ha were vineyards and the rest was used for pastures, orchards and roads. On average, peasants sowed 1,045 ha with corn, 880 ha with wheat, 28 ha with oats and 75 ha with barley. The village also boasted of having 11 tractors, 8 threshers, 325 sowing machines, 723 plows, 850 harrows, 345 weeding machines and 130 threshing machines. The livestock statistics were as follows: 300 Siementhal cows, 34 calves, 396 Nonius horses, 350 mares and 155 colts. Records mention the existence of 14 grocery stores, 3 pubs, 9 brandy distilleries, 5 slaughterhouses and 3 bakeries.

In 1945, the village counted 3,106 inhabitants, having lost 250 between 1941 and 1945.[6] In terms of arable land, 187 *iugăre* of arable land and 20 *iugăre* of vineyards were confiscated by the state in 1945 according to Article 8 of the Armistice Convention. This represented a first stage of expropriation of families who had left Romania during the war and especially during the withdrawal of the *Wehrmacht* units from Romania in 1944.[7] This property came to be administered by the government-run Department for the Administration and Supervision of Enemy Property (*Casa de Administrare şi Supraveghere a Bunurilor Inamice*),[8] so called by analogy with its former owners, now regarded as enemies.[9]

The agrarian reform of 1945 further used ethnicity as a political instrument. The property of the German-speaking population fell under the provisions of Article 3, paragraph 9 of the Agrarian Reform Law. Expropriation concerned land, households, livestock, and agricultural inventory. The inventory of the expropriated property in Tomnatic is astonishing[10]: 768 houses (out of a total of 926),[11] 343 barns for horses and 71 for cows, 41 wine cellars, 11 stores, 516 storage cellars, 15 businesses (ironsmiths, shoemakers, engine repairers, butchers), 167 stallions and mares, 20 colts and 67 cows. The inventory of farm equipment is even more astounding.[12] It includes 16 tractors with attached plows, 111 cattle-drawn plows, 37 sowing machines, 70 wheat combines, 87 harrows, 92 hoeing machines, 3 threshing machines for cereal, 14 threshing machines for corn, 140 wagons, 3 carriages, 26 horse-drawn sleighs, 106 watering cans, 21 presses, 245 barrels with a capacity of over 1,000 liters, 1,177 barrels with capacities of 100 to 1,000 liters and 80 smaller barrels. There were 397 peasants expropriated. This law affected all families owning between one and 71.6 ha of land; most of the affected landowners had between 20 and 35 hectares of land.[13]

In all, the government expropriated 2,664.31 ha of land by January 31, 1948,[14] the date when all court cases triggered by administrative complaints against the expropriations were finally settled.[15] Of this land, the state kept 933.52 ha, while an additional 426.70 ha were redistributed among the other villagers (the so called "entitled") and 1,304.90 hectares to farmers from other villages, especially to the mainly Romanian colonists who arrived in the village between 1945 and 1947.

Largely as a consequence of Romanian settlement, the village population increased from 3,106 inhabitants in 1945 to 4,322 inhabitants by January 25, 1948, according to data from the Institute of Statistics.[16] On April 6, 1947, the mayor's office conducted a village census that compared data on ethnicity as declared in the 1930 census and in 1947[17]; in 1930 there were no Romanians, in 1947 there were 25, but at the same time (1947), there were 1,920 colonists—identified as such in the records!—which would effectively mean that the Romanian population numbered in fact 1,945 souls. Equally interesting is that the 1947 census noted the presence of 2,115 "French," a category that had been statistically missing in 1930. Simultaneously, the "Germans" disappeared. This could be the result of a mistake, as there were about 800 inhabitants missing in these data. On the other hand, one can interpret these statistics as showing that a sizable number of Germans were now (understandably) claiming to be "French."

I should note that the government itself had sanctioned flexibility in ethnic identification. Thus, when the county government asked the mayor's office to conduct the census, the request emphasized that "in accordance with the stipulation of Law 629 of August 6, 1945, Romanian citizens are entitled to freely choose their maternal language and their ethnic identification"; regulations of September 20, 1946 allowed the choice of ethnic identification to be expressed in writing and required no evidence to substantiate it.[18] Those who took advantage of this possibility to claim French identity would have been able to justify it with parish registers: the local priest had used them to elaborate genealogical notebooks for each claimant.[19]

Claiming French rather than German ethnicity had enormous importance, as it could save German-speakers from deportation to the USSR.[20] Indeed, there were fewer deportations from Tomnatic than from other areas. Thus, of the 150 men and 70 women who were declared eligible for deportation in Tomnatic,[21] the Allied Control Commission (*Comisia Aliată de Control)* headquartered in Comloş ended up deporting only 128 men and 60 women (188 people), of whom 24 had already returned home in 1946 for medical reasons. According to data from November 16, 1949, 77 of the 188 deportees returned to Tomnatic from work camps in the USSR.[22]

Moreover, French ethnicity was also used to claim exemption from expropriation. Thus, on February 5, 1946, Ioan Damas, Ioan Frecot and Francisc Doron demanded exemption based on the fact that "the citizens living in this village are of French origin, as established by the Timişoara Administrative Court and by the Supreme Administrative Court." Their request emphasized that "few of the inhabitants of this commune were members of the former German ethnic group and those who declared themselves German had done so only under constant pressure and threats."[23] Yet, as one of my interviews suggests,[24] claiming French ethnicity no longer worked during the deportations to Bărăgan in 1951. These deportations decreased the total population of the commune from 4,322 in 1948 to 3,117. In the 1952 census, there is no mention at all of the French-speaking population. According to the 1952 census data, the distribution of the population by ethnicity was as follows: 57.55 percent Germans (i.e., 1,794 individuals), 28.83 percent Ro-

manians (898 individuals), 6.22 percent Hungarians, 2.08 percent Bulgarians, and 5.07 percent Roma.[25]

Ethnic Hungarians were also abusively expropriated. The protest of the local organization of the Hungarian People's Union (HPU) exposed the vacuous state rhetoric on equal rights and asked that the expropriation decision concerning 18 ethnic Hungarians be cancelled[26] because decisions were motivated by "chauvinistic and inimical" sentiments.[27] (One of the first measures adopted after August 23, 1944 had been the sacking of all ethnic Germans and Hungarians from the commune's administrative offices.)[28] The official charge was that local Hungarians had collaborated with the Horthy administration and the Hungarian fascist regime. The HPU initiative was successful and the 18 Hungarians were reinstated.

The review of contestations filed against expropriation was time-consuming and delayed the redistribution of property. On August 23, 1946, the authorities suspended the review process pending the exhaustion of the appeal procedure by the Central Commission for Agrarian Reform.[29] The redistribution of land demanded by the 1945 agrarian reform bill was just as sluggish. It took more than two years for the government to dispatch a topographer to do the requisite measurements, which finally began on August 26, 1947. According to records dated February 2, 1948, 1,730.79 ha were redistributed to 309 new owners, with the GAC benefiting from a transfer of 933.52 hectares of land from the state reserve.[30]

Under these circumstances, the establishment of the GAC was a mere formality. As N.W. recalls:

> It was easy to establish a collective farm using such means. They would come, take your vineyard, your house, your tractor and, presto! They set up a collective farm. All they brought was an engineer and an accountant. That was their only basis. The agriculture engineer they brought was hastily educated in Timişoara and the accountant could barely count up to 1,000. And they made us, the owners, give up half of our vineyards and tend both our half and their half and give them half of our income and 70 percent of the wine […] And, of course, they had the wine barrels. They had taken those from us.[31]

A People's Council report dated May 5, 1949 shows that most of the farms in the village were small: 100 of them had less than two hectares, eight had between two and three hectares, 460 had between three and five, and ten farms had between five and ten hectares of land. There were only ten large farms, namely five farms of 10 to 15 ha, four farms of 20 to 30 ha, and one farm of 30 to 40 ha. A total of 2,117 ha of land were distributed among 588 households and 2,954 inhabitants.[32] Of these, 2,530 (i.e., 460 households) owned the standard surface redistributed by the 1945 reform bill (i.e. between three and five hectares). The poorest families, taken together, owned 100 ha, while the richest owned 220 ha.

Most of the redistributed land went to recent settlers.[33] A September 27, 1947

report (filed as no. 1460)[34] shows that of the total number of 305 settlers (household heads) who arrived in the village between 1940 and 1947, 273 came between 1945 and 1947. Families ranged from one to nine members; all of them were ethnic Romanians and all were farmers. Seven such farmers came from Nădlac, in Arad county, 45 from Alba county, some from Bihor, and around 43 from the provinces of Bukovina and Bessarabia. Most of them (i.e., 129) claimed Macedo-Romanian ethnicity and came from the part of Dobrogea that had been ceded to Bulgaria in 1940 (the counties of Caliacra and Durostor).

With one exception, namely Grigore Stroia, who was a Party member, all settlers were members of the communist-sympathizing Ploughman's Front. Stroia later became the president of the Provisional Committee, established in July 1949 at a crucial juncture for the communist take-over of administrative structures. It is also from the ranks of the settlers that the new regime recruited most of the village administrative staff. Nevertheless, in 1951 the settlers from Bukovina and Bessarabia, as well as the Macedo-Romanian settlers, were expropriated and deported to Bărăgan at the same time as part of the German-speaking population. A possible explanation for their deportation is found in reports from the commune to the district, where many of them are mentioned as "recalcitrants"—in the context of pressures being placed on them to join the GAC or give their quotas.[35] The promise of stability and material compensation for what they lost as refugees turned out to be an illusion. They soon realized that they had been given land in order to cede it to the GAC, not to keep it. The regime most resented those who showed entrepreneurial spirit and expanded their wealth, like Gheorghe Dogariu, a settler who managed to buy six additional hectares of land and even a tractor and a threshing machine for his farm.[36] In 1952 he was listed as a *chiabur*. This suggests that the 1945 land reform was not meant to strengthen individually-owned farms, but to discourage them by all possible means. Later we find the colonists in both camps—those in power, and those oppressed—which indicates that we should be wary of making hasty generalizations.

At any rate, the settlement process led to predictable tensions in the village, reflected in the numerous complaints and contestations filed. Using Article 8 of the Armistice Convention, the Ministry of Agriculture and Public Domain and the National Office for Settlement allowed settlers, most of whom lacked material means, to move into the houses of Germans declared "absentee" (Germans who had left the country during the German withdrawal), and even into the houses of Germans still in the village.[37] Most of the agricultural inventory and households given to settlers came from expropriations of Germans. A November 5, 1946 document[38] describes how settlers from Săcălaz settled in Tomnatic, showing that the settler would typically use most of the house and adjacent facilities, and the owner would be merely "tolerated on his own property."[39] As N.W. recalls:

> Germans were left without house, livelihood or land. They brought settlers and told German families to use only one room of their own houses. They brought settlers from Dobrogea, most of them Macedonians, or from as far

> as Moldova and from next door, from Hunedoara. Each settler was given three hectares and a half of land. We were left with no land after they had expropriated us to pay for German war debts. Once the war was lost, there was nothing we could do.[40]

The same respondent indicated that his family had abandoned their house to two settler families and moved in with his parents-in-law, where only one settler family was housed.[41]

Given the situation, it is not surprising that tensions between Germans and the Romanian settlers ran high. One settler asked to be relocated from the house he was assigned to because the owner had said that "whoever enters into his house would either walk over his corpse, or he would kill anyone who dared come in." Such cases were not rare. A Ploughman's Front document illustrates the situation well:

> By divesting Swabians of their rights, we have jeopardized a most important productive resource. From the point of view of agricultural skills, the settlers are inferior because nobody made any selection before bringing them here. Some settlers are destroying goods and squandering farm equipment.[42]

Historian Vasile Râmneanțu cites a document dated November 1, 1946, which noted that "in villages of colonists, Macedonians, Transylvanians and Bukovinans clashed, with each group struggling to control the commune's leadership in order to redistribute the best farms to their regional group."[43]

The social and ethnic clashes between Germans and settlers were manipulated for political purposes and led to deep structural changes in the Tomnatic community. These changes increased as repression reached unprecedented intensity in the period that followed. It culminated in the deportation of one third of the population in 1951. Interestingly enough, a number of the German women who had returned to the village from the Soviet deportation camps or who simply managed to escape deportation married Bessarabian and Bukovinan Romanians, in the hope of ridding themselves of the now troublesome German ethnic label. Ironically, however, they were to be deported again, this time not as Germans but as members of the Romanian families into which they had been integrated (the 1951 deportation, unlike that of 1945, was aimed at whole families, not just at individuals).

Among the few settlers who returned to the village after the 1951 deportation, some have grim memories about the hostility with which Germans met them, and some even refused to talk about those times. M.C., a former Bessarabian colonist, described the humiliating conditions experienced by new settlers and war refugees, many of whom had fled communism. Their poverty stood in stark contrast with the prosperity of the Germans, who looked down on them. These experiences left an unpleasant taste in settlers' mouths, generating bitter memories, feelings of frustration, and resentment.

By contrast, and somewhat paradoxically, Germans seemed more forgiving and perceived the 1951 deportation as a common tragedy that created solidarity among all deportees. One German respondent insisted that "in Bărăgan we all went through the same torment." Many other respondents saw the settlers in a positive light and seemed to hold them in higher esteem than the settlers who arrived in the village after 1989. The tendency for memory to reduce dissonance certainly plays a role in their accounts: "Now we are on very good terms with the settlers because they copied a lot from us and showed friendship and good judgment." By contrast, Germans were more reserved towards the post-1989 settlers because the latter "entered German homes and took their rights for granted and ruined this village."[44] One could argue that Germans may have thought likewise about the early settlers in 1945–1948.

In general, the situation of ethnic Germans at the end of 1948 was dismal. As N.H. recalled, "Our land was gone, our wealth was gone, and when the communists arrived, nothing of ours was left, as they seized everything. So I left for Timişoara to learn a trade. I studied there for a year and learned how to cultivate early-season tomatoes."[45] To salvage whatever was left of their once thriving economy—and like many other Swabians—N.H. learned to make a living by better exploiting the agricultural potential of his backyard and selling its products, for as long as possible, in Timişoara.

2. THE NEW MASTERS: "INFORMATION MEMOS" AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The reports sent by local administrations to the higher echelons of the Party constitute a rich source of information about the context in which collectivization took place. These reports enable researchers to study the relationships between the local and central levels of power, as well as the strategies used by the Party and the Securitate to strengthen their control over society and to prevent or repress any form of opposition. In 1949, Stalinist terror began operating in Romania and took on extremely aggressive forms. Furthermore, noticeable changes in the content and language of the reports indicate two interrelated phenomena: the gradual building up of the Party's monopoly on power, and the Securitate's increasing control over cadre policy and over the population in general.

Thus, if until 1949 the regime maintained a semblance of democracy by having multi-party Political Councils within the Provisional Committees, after 1949 the logic of political terror and "total war" against real or imaginary "enemies" became hegemonic. All monitoring reports and memos drafted by the local municipality were at the center's request and were written according to Party-sanctioned templates. These rubrics, which had to be scrupulously filled out, illustrate the evolution of problems that were on the Party's agenda. They suggest that authorities were increasingly obsessed with "the mood of the population" and with the possibility of "subversive actions." At the same time, after 1949 authori-

ties became increasingly uninterested in the welfare of the population and the economic situation in agriculture, commerce and trade. After 1949, "class struggle" supplanted any other concerns.

In May–October 1946, the reports written by Djermecov, the chairman of the Tomnatic Committee for Agrarian Reform, repeatedly recorded the mood of the population as generally "quiescent" and the general situation as "satisfactory."[46] At times, the same official wrote about "acts of sabotage" (there were 17 such acts in March 1946, 10 in July 1946, 23 in September 1946 and 10 in August 1946), for which local authorities had drafted documents of criminal investigation. Subsequent documents (notably letter no. 1216/1946 dated September 24, 1946 and sent by the Tomnatic administration to the local police) made it clear that the feared "acts of sabotage" were in fact nothing more than late deliveries of requisition dues. This is confirmed by the 24 official reports issued against "inhabitants who opposed the requisition quotas mandated by government Resolution no. 3246 of July 10, 1946, and requesting the arrest of these inhabitants regardless of whether they end up fulfilling the quota requirements or not."[47] In all these cases, Djermecov, acting under threats that he would receive a disciplinary transfer to a different location should he not be harsh on "saboteurs,"[48] asked the gendarmes to arrest the recalcitrant criminals.[49]

The village council established requisition quotas based on Party instructions, which factored in the total surface of land per household and the yield per hectare. However, government Resolution no. 3.447 of September 13, 1946 (published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 213 of 1946) established that farmers who owned more than 20 hectares had to deliver their entire corn harvest to the state, irrespective of the yield,[50] while mill owners were obliged to deliver the entire amount of flour customarily retained as payment.[51] These harsh provisions were often the object of official abuse. Thus, mill owner Iosif Ballman was asked to deliver 17,000 kilograms of flour, irrespective of the amounts of wheat and corn his mill processed.[52] This amount was so large that, in October 1947, officials noted that the mill owner was unable to deliver.[53] The situation remained the same in December of the same year.[54] Iosif Ballman was "spared" further difficulties once his mill was nationalized in June 1948.

Economic and judiciary repression was doubled by political repression. A memo dated October 1946 noted that ethnic Germans and Hungarians were forbidden to vote.[55] In 1950, this prohibition was expanded to cover 20 *chiaburi*, a political convict and another eight persons of unspecified status.[56] Consequently, 29 people were deemed to be "unworthy." There were also four more people considered "incapable." Moreover, former landowners and merchants were liable to be deprived of the right to vote. There is no mention of such categories in Tomnatic.

The Djermecov reports also note the worsening of the economic situation of the village. Thus, in October 1946 "shops are experiencing bad shortages"; in October 1947 shops "contained cheap merchandise for the most needy peasants"; in December 1947 there was a shortage of cooking oil; in June 1948 "local shops experienced shortages that push villagers to travel to state-owned stores in

Timişoara." On top of all that, the 1946 drought severely affected the harvest. A report dated February 1947 notes under the "miscellaneous" rubric (evidence that these events had not been foreseen in making up the list of questions) that Tomnatic had to share its worsening socio-economic plight with "wagonloads of drought refugees from Northern Bukovina, who arrive either without any documents or without proper ones."[57]

In 1949, reports indicate a significant change in administrative organization: political, administrative and executive powers were merged, and surveillance and repression intensified. Thus, the minutes of the July 12, 1949 meeting of the village's Provisional Committee note that 300 people came to "express their support for the best sons of the working peasantry." The political significance of this meeting was clear: these people were appointed by the regime to "replace the old administrative apparatus with people selected from the ranks of the working class," so that "the state apparatus can invite the popular social strata to join the regime and build socialism."[58]

Among the participants at this meeting were the delegates of all mass associations and organizations in the commune. Village representatives committed themselves to support the Provisional Village Committee and "unmask all saboteurs and class enemies." The secretary of the primary Party organization reminded everybody of "workers all over the world who are determined to fight international exploitation." On this occasion, the chairman of the Sânnicolau Mare district presented a summary of the speech delivered by Interior Minister Teohari Georgescu in connection with the vote to set up a Provisional Committee. The list of those named (thus, not elected) to the committee included data on ethnicity, wealth, social origin and political affiliation. The data illustrate the Party's cadre policies: a clear preference for the working class, the continued exclusion of Germans but the acceptance of Hungarians.

The appointed president was Grigore Stroia, a Romanian settler. He came from a family of "land workers" (the Party liked to avoid the word "peasant") and owned the standard amount of land granted by the 1945 land reform (i.e., 4.4 ha). The Committee secretary, Gheza Trasser, was a Hungarian Party member from a "land worker" family. Ágnes Lörincz, a Committee member, also had a "healthy social origin," as certified by her "land worker" family. One can note that the term "peasant" was avoided and was replaced with plowman, "land worker," and subsequently "agricultural worker." Change in language reflected the changing status of this category of people. While the policy toward the Hungarian minority changed from rejection to acceptance, one cannot say the same of the German minority, who continued to be excluded from politics. One month later, the Cadre Division of the Provisional Committee requested another report on the new cadres,[59] to check on "how they are behaving."

There is no doubt that the behavior being checked was political, as we can see from the confidential information reports sent upward by the Secretary of the Tomnatic Provisional Committee (henceforth the Committee). The subjects of this political surveillance did not all fall into designated categories such as "ene-

mies" or "subversives," *chiaburi*, saboteurs, or "recalcitrants." Instead, they were the cadres themselves. Thus, reports requested in August 1949 by the Cadre Division of the district Provisional Committee reveal a concern to control "elements" who were "creeping into" the leadership of the GAS. Reports dated November 1949–December 1950[60] dutifully note that GAS manager Vasile Russu "refused to cooperate with the provisional Council and Party cadres" and was bent on "sabotaging the local cinema by refusing to allow the cinema manager to use a GAS tractor engine to run the projector."[61] In December 1949, Russu was demoted and replaced with the more compliant I. Botez. A memo from November 1949 further notes that Schleich Petru, a well-off peasant who had been expropriated and spent time in Germany, and Luca Constantin, "who is hostile to the current regime," had "infiltrated" the GAS management. Finally, in September 1950, reports note that "the cadres of the state apparatus are loyal," while the November 1950 memos note that "a thorough background check of state employees had been performed."

Within one year of its establishment, the Committee changed its leadership. The new secretary was Carol Medves, and the new chairman was Petre Boboiciov, an ethnic Bulgarian. Boboiciov began signing the Committee reports as in August 1950. Like his brother Pavel Boboiciov (who was the commune's Party Secretary in January 1950, later a delegate to the district and GAC chairman beginning in 1951), Petre Boboiciov is remembered to this day as an evil character in the village.

Over time the issue of requisitions so often mentioned in the Committee reports overlaps with the difficulties of establishing the GAC; it was eventually established in 1950, but not without major problems. The January 25, 1950 reports indicate that the Tomnatic GAC "is on its way," that 47 villagers owning four hectares each had already signed up, and that local authorities "are working hard to persuade more villagers to join."[62] A February 14, 1950 memo reveals that it had been difficult to set up the GAC because those who had signed up "withdrew their signatures for unknown reasons."[63] The March 14, 1950 report shows that the settlers and peasants who benefited from the 1945 agrarian reform slowed things down, because they "refuse to let go of their private property rights."[64]

On May 25, 1950, the tone of the reports became harsher, listing by name anyone who leased out land to others and could not fulfill their own requisition quotas. The same people were blamed for failing to meet "the 3–5 March 1949 RWP Resolution about socialist agriculture and the establishment of GACs. Intense efforts deployed so far have been squandered by these dangerous elements who agitate against the collective farms." In June, the same persons were labeled "reactionary elements."

Finally, a report noted that, after several failed attempts, "on August 13, 1950, Tomnatic organized the festivities to inaugurate the GAC 'December the 30th.'"[65] Ladislau Raciov was appointed GAC president. However, the initial membership of the GAC was low: only 46 households, of which 18 were landless, 18 were poor and only 10 were mid-sized. These represented only 4 percent of

total households.[66] The inventory was correspondingly modest: only 114 ha of land, of which 104 ha were arable land and 10 were vineyards. To augment this inventory, the state donated 99 ha. In the distribution of members by ethnicity, the prominence of minorities is obvious: 19 Bulgarians, 15 Hungarians, 13 Romanians and 6 Germans. To give the reader a sense of what the Tomnatic population looked like from an ethnic point of view, we might mention that in 1950, of the village's 4,713 inhabitants, 2,147 were Germans, 1,938 Romanians, 207 Hungarians, 84 Bulgarians and 337 were recorded as "other nationalities." Also, of 1,494 families, 13 were listed as *chiaburi*, 408 as middle peasants, 123 as poor and 443 as landless.[67]

The establishment of the Provisional Committee in Tomnatic coincided with the emergence of the "*chiabur* question." Starting in the fall of 1949, Committee reports described the local *chiaburi* as quiescent, assessing their number at between ten and twelve. Yet a May 1950 report added that although they appeared quiescent, "it is well known that they want the regime to change in order to better their situation and to continue exploiting the working class."[68] The June 1950 memo reproduced this new perception: "The *chiaburi* make no noise, yet their feelings are well known." Only in August did the Committee report on the first *chiabur* action: the *chiabur* Nicolae Schreiber had failed to deliver his full quota and was "unmasked" by the Council.

A radical shift in tone appeared in December 1950, when Committee reports labeled *chiaburi* as "class enemies." The change had been foreshadowed by a September 23 report, in which the Committee, having recorded that the GAC was strengthened by the collectivization of the land and farm inventory of two *chiaburi* (D.I. and C.I.),[69] goes on to remark that "the class struggle occurs in increasingly harsh conditions."[70] Committee reports drafted in 1951 mark the intensification of anti-*chiabur* repression and anticipate the first signs of a crackdown on resistance by ordinary villagers. This development was likely related to orders from higher Party and State echelons that indicate they were co-opting the village administration into surveillance activities. Specifically, the village Committee was asked to report on: (1) the mood of villagers, (2) the attitudes of indigent and middle peasants vis-à-vis the regime, (3) the attitudes and actions of the *chiaburi* vis-à-vis the regime, (4) the situation of the SMT, (5) the situation of the GAS, and (6) the situation of the GAC. With regard to points 4–6, the superior Party and State organs demanded to know the attitudes of the population toward these communist forms of farming, untrustworthy individuals working in these institutions, the names of those who cause social and political agitation, and the topics being raised by agitators.

On January 12, 1951, the situation in Tomnatic appeared particularly tense. The Committee report remarked that authorities arrested a "group of traitors," which included five peasants who had been granted land in the 1945 agrarian reform. The group was charged with "scheming against the established social order," or with complicity to this crime. Those charged were sentenced to prison terms of

eight to twenty years, whereas their accomplices received terms of four to five years and political disenfranchisement.

These reports from 1951 are key to understanding the ideological and political context in which deportations to Bărăgan occurred, beginning on June 18, 1951, with the deportation of 386 families.[71] Suddenly the village "mood" became "agitated" and "demoralized," as the reports put it. An effect of the deportation was that villagers stopped opposing the measures being taken and began to join the GAC, thus indicating that the goal of intimidating the population had been achieved. "Following the dislocations of June 18, 1951, 30 new membership applications were filed. Most peasants seek to join the GAC, which suggests that political conditions are ripe for its expansion." On July 3, 1951, 40 new applications were filed.[72] Subsequent reports (e.g., files 406–409) dryly note that the property of the deportees was transferred to the GAC. According to a report dated May 30, 1952, the GAC now owned 576 ha of land (most of it appropriated from the deportees) and the GAS owned 1,715 ha. As a consequence of these transformations, Tomnatic now had 822 land owners, of whom only 13 owned between 6 and 13 ha.[73] On March 1, 1952, local authorities also noted the establishment of a small TOZ called "November 7" with 38.02 ha.[74]

Chiaburi remained under surveillance throughout the coming years. Government order no. 7742, issued on March 26, 1952, stated that "*chiaburi* must respect their requisition quotas; do not refrain from enforcing surcharges if they fail to comply fully."[75] At that time, a 1952 report showed that the village had 29 *chiabur* households, of which 26 were Germans.[76] Only two *chiaburi* owned more than 30 hectares; of those who owned less than ten, most were listed for owning small stores, workshops, distilleries, or tractors, or for employing apprentices.

By 1952, Tomnatic was again under stress when a People's Council employee spread the rumor that a new deportation was being planned. The deportation plan remained a rumor, however, and the employee in question—instantly labeled by the authorities as a "former *chiabur*"—paid with his job for having spread the rumor.[77]

The removal of around 94 peasants from *chiaburi* lists began in May 1953 and followed a set procedure (for details, see Verdery's article in this volume).[78] It included brief stories as to how the people in question had earned or inherited their property, and the causes of their decreasing economic power (needless to add, no mention was made of the authorities' role in producing that outcome). The report also discussed *chiaburi* who became GAC members and were then excluded, as well as those who were erroneously declared *chiaburi*. Some of them had been expropriated in 1947 of the land (i.e., 4.40 ha) they had been granted, as army veterans of the anti-fascist military campaign in 1944 and 1945, by government Resolution no. 308. By combining these official documents with oral histories, I was able to go beyond statistical tables and reconstitute the lives of those affected by the tragedy of collectivization.

The Bărăgan deportees returned to the village in 1956. By Decree no. 81 of 1954, subsequently modified by several resolutions,[79] they were reinstated as own-

ers of their homes.[80] They were even given small plots of land (no more than half a hectare)[81] as "compensation" for the land expropriated from them in 1945. Eventually, these ex-deportees were forcibly deprived of these small "compensation" plots when the GAC was established.[82]

After reading these reports, one is left with the strong impression that the Party-State was engaged in an all-out war against an enemy who could hide anywhere and pursue completely unexpected objectives. The vilification of *chiaburi* by the regime went hand in hand with the endorsement of violent repression. On February 28, 1950, Interior Minister Teohari Georgescu delivered a speech advocating "the identification and tracking down of *chiabur* elements,"[83] in which he spoke of *chiabur* families as "enemies" that constantly changed tactics and engaged in an endless effort to undermine GACs by infiltrating them.[84] Should the authorities track down *chiaburi* who continued to employ hired labor for their households, the minister had a straightforward solution: "hit them hard, till you knock their eyes out."[85]

The demonization of *chiaburi* went hand in hand with an incitement to all-out violence. A favorite slogan was "Let the murderous *chiabur* feel the anger of the people,"[86] and most newspaper propaganda drawings on the issue represented *chiaburi* as snakes, or as wolves in sheep's clothing being run over by a peasant cart.[87] The obsession with the villainous *chiaburi* does not spare even the GAC model charter, which contains a paragraph that reads as follows: "Let us advance towards total victory over *chiaburi*, exploiters and enemies of the working people."[88]

In the period I am seeking to reconstruct, terror and repression were combined with propaganda. Naturally, to the metaphor of total war against *chiaburi*, the regime added the mystification of contemporary realities and conjured up the vision of the communist utopia beckoning "the people" into the future. Thus, the world of "double speak" sought to obscure the world of terror. For example, on September 21, 1963 the leadership of the Sânnicolau Mare district mailed the Tomnatic People's Council a list of instructions regarding the organization of a propaganda exhibition[89] on the "superiority of the large socialist farms over the small private farm," as well as on the "positive changes triggered in villages by increases in the economic and educational status of GAC members." It was recommended that a large portrait of Chairman Gheorghiu-Dej be displayed with a banner containing the following excerpt from Gheorghiu-Dej's speech at the Conference of GAC Leading Workers: "Only the deep conviction of the working peasantry that the GAC gives them great advantages can serve as a basis for the creation of truly viable GACs."

The propaganda about the personality of the Party leader was equally stereotypical. Gheorghiu-Dej was depicted as a man with "a clear vision," "strengthened as steel by grueling combat," "a brilliant mind that organized the collapse of the old capitalist order and its replacement by a new order," who "spared no effort to revolutionize the entire social history of Romania" and who "had been among those oppressed by capitalism since his infancy, when he first participated in the

subversion and toppling of the bourgeois-landlord regime."[90] A February 1952 meeting of Party officials in Tomnatic also emphasized the role of "The Great Bearer of the Flag of Peace, Iosif Visarionovici Stalin" as well as the model of the Soviet Union, where "the *kolkhoz* saved Soviet peasants from the *chiabur* exploitation, from poverty and squalor and provided them with happy and prosperous lives."[91]

3. PERSPECTIVES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL: "US" VERSUS "THEM"

From today's perspective, how did those who suffered collectivization in Tomnatic represent the regime? To answer this question, we might start with N.W.'s retrospective attempt to synthesize his experience, as he gives an etymological account of the term that turned him into an "undesirable":

> The *chiabur* was defined as a person who doesn't fit. "*Chiabur*" is a Turkish word, you know. In the old times, the *chiabur* was somebody who lived very well and had everything, that's the Turkish idea. The communists turned him into an "enemy of the workers." "The *chiabur* sucks your blood," as they used to tell people. They would tell people, "Now his wealth belongs to you."[92]

When asked how many *chiaburi* there were in the village, N.W. promptly answered: "Anyone the regime didn't like."[93]

Interviewees were keen to distinguish between the regime's discourse and social reality: "You were what they labeled you […] what they wanted you to be." They did not convey the impression that they had seen the situation as negotiable, even though the village had experienced the removal of people from *chiabur* lists. On the contrary, they emphasized the abusive nature of designating *chiaburi*, while framing in dichotomous terms the relationship between the regime ("they," "those men") and the village society ("us"). I stress that in the context of the Romanian rural community, "them" and "those men" are derogatory terms:

> Party bosses were mostly former bums in those times.
>
> *They* would blacklist you and then the army would come and shove you into a train and take you away.
>
> *These men* were all poor; a well-off man would not join the Bolsheviks.

Particularly irksome to my respondents was that the mayor appointed during collectivization was an uneducated man. In their view, this illustrated how the regime's policy was to make local administrations easy to manipulate. As N.W. put it, the uneducated man can be easily made to "see class enemies everywhere," like

"a horse that pulls the wagon with no harness and no need of whipping, as the beast is so used to pulling the wagon that harnessing and whipping are no longer necessary."[94] N.W. liked to emphasize that unlike the uneducated "them," he had attended the gymnasium in Timişoara, the county capital: "My parents wanted to send me to school so I would be better than they were. In those times people thought that people with schooling would be better and more prosperous than simple peasants."[95]

Also conveying a sense of the social distinction gained from schooling is another respondent, M.H., who came from a well-to-do peasant family and attended middle school at the *Notre Dame* Lyceum in Timişoara. She said she had refused to join the collective farm because she would not mix with "ordinary folk." According to her, when the collective farm was established those who joined first were only "destitute, wretched people."[96] This respondent seemed convinced that her decision to resist the GAC campaign led to the deportation of her family to Bărăgan.

Most interviewees shared representations of the early collective farm as a site of marginality ("lazy bones," "drunks" and "gypsies"). Consequently, they framed the act of joining the GAC as a form of social degradation or as punishment. Thus, N.W. was quick to point out that people would resist GAC membership because GAC members were "mostly people who would work for 'points,' poor souls who were dependent on communism."[97] He added that his father-in-law, formerly a well-off peasant, was given the degrading job of washing the tails of cattle in the GAC. Another category of peasants that were deemed fit to join the GAC were those who had no means to support themselves due to the social and political disruptions of that period. For example, one informant (I.S.) confessed he had no choice but to join the GAC, as he had returned home only in 1948 and learned that his father's rope-making business, the family's only source of income, had been nationalized.

Most of the time my respondents framed the regime as a hostile monolith (e.g., "the communists," "the Bolsheviks," "the Party," "the Russians"), which is perhaps a reflection of the homogeneous categorizations used by the regime itself vis-à-vis its opponents (e.g., "the *chiaburi*," "the exploiters," "the class enemy"). Asked who had expropriated his family's property, I.G. hesitated between indicating institutions and the agents who worked for them when he answered: "The state, the mayor, the gendarmes."

Sometimes, however, the relationship with the regime appears personalized. To illustrate, for I.G., the regime was represented by the GAC president for I.G., with whom he had developed a bad relationship. I.G. clashed with this man over his refusal to give the GAC his hay harvest, which was used as an excuse to have him deported to Bărăgan—despite the fact that he, I.G., was a poor peasant at that time. Likewise, N.B. commented that his less than well-to-do father was scheduled for deportation by an overzealous delegate, his neighbor, who made up the lists.[98] I.W. had a similar story about his father, a poor and diligent peasant

who refused to sign up for GAC membership. In I.W.'s narration, we see the personalization of the regime, as well as the mixture of threats and promises used by collectivization agents:

> There was this man who had been appointed as regime representative for our street. He was also a Party man. He came to my father and said: "Hans, if you don't sign up, you're in trouble." Back then, "trouble" meant deportation to Bărăgan. "Come and join the GAC and you'll be just fine," the representative added. My father replied: "I won't, as I just returned from the war and I want to resume farming.[99]

The regime representative in question was one of the Boboiciov brothers (Pavel and Petre), who held important Party positions in the People's Council and in the GAC during those years. Interviewees described the Boboiciovs as unequivocally malevolent men. Indeed, one of the brothers was consistently portrayed as Satan himself. The mysterious death of one of them (I could not figure out which, as respondents were very confused themselves) became a village legend imprinted in the collective memory. The legend, reproduced by my interviewees as a group, stresses the divine nature of the punishment. The vilification of the Boboiciovs as emissaries of the communist order is consolidated in M.H.'s stories about Pavel Boboiciov, the GAC chairman who put her husband, N.H., on the deportation list.[100] She insisted that if personal animosities or rejections of proposals for collaboration (N.H. turned down an offer to become GAC chairman) were invoked to justify deportation decisions, integration into the regime and exceptional achievements (N.H., deported to Bărăgan at the time, had supplied a record vegetable harvest for the 1953 Bucharest fair, where Alexandru Moghioroş himself rewarded him) were of no help at all in preventing these decisions.[101]

The strongest consensus among interviewees was that collectivization was accomplished by force. I.W.'s statements make the point:

> When they organized the collectivization campaign, you had to join, whether you wanted to or not. They would come and take your wagon, your horses and your entire property. They would find methods to break you in order to make you join. It was like when they took the gold jewelry away from people: they would beat them until they gave all the gold they owned. Or, they would come almost daily to your house. They would go to my father's house every two days and say the same thing: "You must join." In the end, what was he to do? He joined. […] They left people with no resources, they closed off all other paths, for instance by fixing prices in the marketplace. […] They bled people dry by closing all avenues for making money.[102]

I.G. remarked that "People signed up their land so they wouldn't have anything […] Some even gave up their land without joining the GAC." I.G. said that there were cases "when Party people came all the way down from Timişoara to convince

people to join," and: "In the end, people had to join, they had no other choice, as they were told that their land would be taken no matter what."

Some respondents also noted that leadership positions overlapped with policing functions. N.W. argued that during collectivization "all sorts of rogues," of various ethnic backgrounds, infiltrated the village community to report on people, while being themselves threatened by their bosses with deportation. Archival documents and respondents confirm that threats ultimately became reality. There were cases in which Party cadres who had drafted deportation lists were themselves deported.[103] "They thought that having a Party card would deliver them to heaven; that turned out not to be the case," another respondent declared.[104]

4. CONCLUSIONS

The similarity of peoples' views about what power meant in Tomnatic during collectivization suggest that their memories precisely retained the elements of a cleavage, operating on multiple levels. The elimination of private ownership gradually destroyed all forms of social independence. At the same time, intrusions into family life—tradicionally an important economic and symbolic resource—as well as the destruction of cohesion by uniformly applying blame and collective punishment to an entire social or ethnic group, regardless of actual individual responsibility, had long-term consequences. A deep crisis of individual and collective identity came together with a systematic distrust of government and politics in general. More broadly speaking, collectivization devalued honest work, education, social competence, individual job performance and individual capacity, in order to create and transmit symbolic and material goods to heirs. The simultaneous use of ethnic and political criteria was perceived as a campaign of regime-orchestrated repression against the community, which later contributed to the successive waves of emigration that made Tomnatic a predominantly Romanian village. The symbolic value of this exodus for the inhabitants of the Banat cannot be ignored; the region's other groups saw the Germans as a model, embodying the set of ideals and values just mentioned. In comparative terms, this chapter shows tensions and complications similar to those Katherine Verdery analyzes in this volume, and in her earlier work on the "elasticity of land."[105]

To conclude, let me recall the words of F.W., one of my interviewees, who participated as an activist in the collectivization campaign in Variaş, another village in Timiş county with a predominantly German population. One day a villager asked him "Why do you demolish an entire society, rather than build a new one on top of it?" F.W. didn't know how to answer and asked the Party chairman for advice. "You should have said that we build a new society on the ruins of the old one." F.W. confessed he was still puzzled and kept asking himself: "Why would one tear down a wall that is strong and well made just to build another one?"

Translated from Romanian by Cornel Ban and Katherine Verdery

NOTES

1 I have returned to Tomnatic several times since 1991. In the beginning I was interested mostly in the Bărăgan deportations; then I gradually became interested in the 1945 deportation to the USSR and its effects on ethnic identity issues. Between 2001 and 2002 I conducted six interviews on collectivization and another nine interviews on related issues. Most of the witnesses of the early collectivization period had emigrated to Germany. I also conducted intensive archival research on the documents of the Tomnatic municipality, now stored in DJAN Timiş. The bases of my archival research were files no. 246 and 538, which are part of collection no. 955 and cover the 1941–1963 period. In the remainder of the endnotes of this article I will reference only the file number and the page of the documents contained in DJAN Timiş, Fond "Primăria Tomnatic," as it was the only collection and fund on which I conducted research.

2 See the most frequently used source on this topic: Emil Botiş, *Recherches sur la population française du Banat* (Timişoara: Asociația descendenților coloniştilor francezi din Banat, 1946). For recent research, see Smaranda Vultur, ed., *Germanii din Banat prin povestirile lor* (Bucharest: Paideia, 2000), 247–289.

3 On the stages and pace of collectivization, see Robert Levy, *Gloria şi decăderea Anei Pauker* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2002), 86. See also the chapter by Robert Levy in this volume.

4 According to H.D. cited in Vultur, *Germanii din Banat*, 253–263, the 1927 census was the initiative of a francophone notary public who assessed French ethnicity by the names people had.

5 File 247/1941.

6 File 309/1945, 2.

7 The 37 people who did not return were deprived of their Romanian citizenship by Decree Law no. 163 of 1948. See also file 364/1948–1950, 335–337.

8 Dumitru Şandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945 în România* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 169–170; Levy, *Gloria şi decăderea Anei Pauker*, 169.

9 The money earned from the lease of this property is transferred to the Bucharest-based *Sovrombanc,* State Bank and respectively to CEC (account CASBI). Source: file 322/1945–1947, 29.

10 File 323/1947, 192–200.

11 See table in file 309/1945, 2.

12 Compare with data from file 302/1945, 109.

13 File 302/1945, 28 and on; see also pages 419–427 and 482–507 for detailed data on expropriated land.

14 File 302/1947, 427.

15 See table drafted on May 15, 1948, which shows 114 owners of 513,883 *iugare* as exempted from the measure. See File 346/1948, 310–312.

16 File 302/1945, 428–429.

17 See Table 189 signed by the mayor and the notary public, file 323/1947, 189.

18 See Emil Botiş, *Declararea şi rectificarea naționalității potrivit statutului naționalităților* (Timişoara: Stoica and comp., no date).

19 Vultur, *Germanii din Banat*, 253–288.

20 The court ruling is highly complex and can be researched under file 334/1946, 105–174. In brief, the plaintiffs used as evidence data from the 1927 census and monographs of Torontal and Tomatic authored by Samuil Borovschi and Georg Reiser.

21 See table in file 332/1946, 2–3.
22 File 364/1948–1950, 637–638. By ruling no. 214 of January 28, 1946 of the Romanian government (File 332/1946, 1.), all German males aged 17–45 and German women aged 18–30 were deported to labor camps in the USSR.
23 File 302/1945, 23.
24 Vultur, *Germanii din Banat*, 253–263.
25 This source also records the distribution by class: 169 poor peasants, 499 middle-income peasants, 439 workers and 135 clerks.
26 File 332/1946, 103.
27 See also Şandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945 în România*, 167 and file 364/1950, 403–405.
28 File 294/1941, 231 and 128 (this refers to order no. 9478 A of October 24, 1944 concerning Law no. 486 published on October 8, 1944, in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 233).
29 File 332/1946, 94.
30 File 302/1945, 429.
31 Interview with N.W., 82, ethnic German, middle income listed as kulak, deported to Bărăgan. Interview recorded in Tomnatic in October 2000.
32 File 307/1949, 65.
33 Detailed data on the population transfer to Banat can be found in Şandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945*, 207–208.
34 File 323/1947, 194–195. Table no. 857/1948 of May 29, 1948, file 364/1948–1950, 341–344 (also listed are 254 family fathers and 892 dependents).
35 File 307/1949, 102–108, 118.
36 File 425/1952–1953, 230–232.
37 File 322/1946–1947, 733.
38 File 322/1946–1947, 960.
39 File 322/1946–1947, 960–965.
40 Interview with N.W., 82 years old, male, Tomnatic, October 2000.
41 An equally repressive "accommodation policy" was also implemented in Romanian cities.
42 Vasile Râmneanţu, "Activitatea organizaţiei judeţene Timiş-Torontal a Frontului Plugarilor in perioada 1944–1946," *Analele Banatului*, Serie nouă Istorie, IV (1996) 2, 173–186.
43 Râmneanţu, "Activitatea organizaţiei," 179.
44 Interview with N.B., 67 years old, male, mechanic, ethnic German, Bărăgan deportee. The interview was conducted in Tomnatic, in August 2000. Presently, the multiethnic Banat identity has replaced ethnic identities, yet inter-regional rivalries are as intense as ethnic identities once used to be.
45 Smaranda Vultur, *Istorie trăită. Istorie povestită. Deportarea în Bărăgan 1951–1956* (Timişoara: Editura Amarcord, 1997), 259.
46 File 302/1945, 84–94.
47 File 332/1946, 15. Pages 62–91 of the same file contain reports in response to violations of Law no. 63, published in the *Monitorul Oficial* no. 40 (February 16, 1946) and of Law 351/1945 on speculation and economic sabotage.
48 File 318/1946–1948, 637, 648, 659.
49 File 318/1946–1948, 644, 646.
50 The measure was aimed at the 25 Tomnatic households that owned over 20 ha of land. File 318/1946–1948, 267.

51 File 318/1946–1948, 458.
52 File 318/1946–1948, 356.
53 File 318/1946–1948, 401.
54 File 318/1946–1948, 396.
55 File 318/1946–1948, 410.
56 See table in File 360/1946, 253; File 360/1946, 278.
57 File 318/1946–1948, 417–418.
58 File 359/1948–1949, 109–119.
59 File 359/1948–1949, 124.
60 File 359/1948–1949, 100–121.
61 File 307/1950, 101.
62 File 307/1950, 105.
63 File 307/1950, 106.
64 File 307/1950, 107–108.
65 File 307/1950, 117.
66 File 403/1950–1951, 305–307.
67 A similar assessment issued by the authorities on March 13, 1951 finds that the village had 403 settlers (with 7 of them as GAC members) and 1,030 natives (with 39 of them as GAC members). Source: File 403/1950–1951, 30–31.
68 File 307/1950, 113.
69 The GAC statute formally denied the access of *chiaburi* to GAC membership, yet it allowed for donations made by *chiaburi*, a loophole that was widely capitalized upon by the collectivization campaigners.
70 See Table no. 545/1952, file 307/1950, 286.
71 File 407/1951–1952, n.p.
72 File 406/1951–1952, 17.
73 File 425/1952–1953, 108–121.
74 File 403/1950–1951, 67. See also the instructions for the implementation of the GAC model charter from File 425/1952–1953, 359–364.
75 File 425/1952–1953, 14. See also Gheorghe Iancu, Virgiliu Țârău and Ottmar Traşcă, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Aspecte legislative, 1945–1952* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000), 253, 127.
76 No. 72/1952, File 425/1952–1953, 230–232.
77 File 425/1952–1953, 201.
78 File 466/1956–1957, 25–34. File no. 466 included top-secret documents (previously found in file no. 44) about the kulak situation in 1956–1957.
79 Neither the decree nor the Government Resolution in question was ever published. Yet the opening of the government towards minorities is evidenced by a report of the executive dated September 19, 1956. The note is full of rhetoric about the progressive role of ethnic minorities in helping the majority to end oppression and about the regime's commitment to "ending the shameful oppression of Germans and Hungarians." The decree on the restitution of nationalized houses is the outcome of the constitutional principle of full equality of rights. For further details, see file 469/1956–1958, 39–40.
80 For details on the situation of the deportees see file 406/1951–1952, 3–10 and on. Page 18 of this file shows that deportations freed 264 houses, 381 rooms and 266 auxiliary buildings. Data from file 469/1956–1958 show that in 1956 the regime restituted 649 houses of the 710 that had been expropriated.

81 File 466/1956–1957, 84.
82 On July 9, 1960, Tomnatic had 510 households in the GAC (file 538/1960–1961, 58). Another 50 households and 628 families had not joined. Of these, 530 were families of workers, 78 of clerks and 33 of craftsmen (file 538/1960–1961, 67071). This is a major change with respect to social and professional membership. Peasants who did not join the GAC often had little land (less than a hectare) and were into the early vegetable business. In a report dated September 15, 1963, after the end of collectivization, the GAC included 667 families and 1,484 ha of land (1,340 ha of arable land). In the whole district there were 36 GACs with 22,675 families and 81,509 ha of land.
83 Dan Cătănuş and Octavian Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Dimensiunea politică,* vol. 1: *1949–1953* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 335.
84 Marius Oprea, ed., *Banalitatea răului. O istorie a Securității în documente, 1949–1989* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2002), 113–131.
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86 Bogdan Tănăsescu, *Colectivizarea între propagandă şi realitate* (Bucharest: Globus [no date]), 28–29.
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96 Vultur, *Istorie trăită*, 258.
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Creating Communist Authority: Class Warfare and Collectivization in Ieud (Maramureş Region)

GAIL KLIGMAN

> "We are living in times of great transformation. One kind of world is dying and another is being born."
>
> D.G., D.S. letter to their brother, D.V., ACNSAS fond "P," file no. 248/2, 23.

> "At this time, persons most dangerous to our regime are harbored in Ieud, a community in Maramureş known to us."
>
> ACNSAS, fond "Penal," file no. 84, vol. 25, 147; Security Service of the Maramureş region, April 26, 1949.

> "In the heart of the reactionaries, we are going to create the first collective."
>
> Party activist during a meeting about collectivization in Maramureş, Sighetu Marmației, 1949; personal communication.

Collectivization was the first mass action through which Romania's young communist regime initiated its radical agenda of social, political, and economic transformation. To that end, the Party promoted class warfare to achieve the inversion of spatial, symbolic, and social relations. Ieud, a community then of some 3,500 inhabitants, was the first collectivized in "historic" Maramureş, a region in the far north of Romania. On March 5, 1950, nine party members—the village total at the time—had the "honor" of formally announcing the creation of the State Agricultural Collective, *Scînteia* (The Spark; henceforth, *GAC Scînteia*).[1] Situated in the Iza Valley, Ieud was better suited for animal husbandry, potato cultivation, fruit tree growing and forestry than large-scale agricultural production. Despite the poor quality of land in this mountainous zone (category V productivity), Ieud—like other villages later collectivized in the same area—had contiguous flat lands for cultivation that were represented officially as adequate grounds for collectivization.[2] This "official" motive notwithstanding, Ieud was collectivized primarily for socio-political reasons. Over the years, the Party and the secret police (or "Securitate") employed diverse methods ranging from benign forms of persuasion to forceful coercion techniques to convince villagers to join the collective farm. Even so, in the end, Ieud was only half collectivized.

Ieud's collectivization can only be understood in the context of its particular history in Maramureş, in consequence of which its subjugation was considered crucial for transforming and instantiating communist rule and practices. In this paper, I first review key features of that history to set the stage for examining collectivization in Ieud. I focus especially on the first phase of collectivization (1949–1952) to illuminate how the transformation of property relations transformed social relations and personhood, and simultaneously established and institutionalized communist authority itself. In the final section, I cursorily reflect on collectivization from the perspective of memory and the rewriting of history. After preliminary analysis of the interview and archival data, I conclude that collectivization in "historic" Maramureş as a whole, and of Ieud in particular, correlated highly with the degree and forms of resistance against communist rule rather than with the economically driven policies of socialist transformation.[3]

1. "REACTIONARIES" IN "REVOLUTIONARY" TIMES: CLASSES AND CLASS WARFARE

Throughout the "extreme years, 1945–1949" and beyond, communist authorities—local, regional, and national—viewed Ieud as a hotbed for "reactionaries" of various kinds who allegedly engaged in "subversive," "counter-revolutionary," "terrorist" acts. Ieud's reputation stemmed first from its prominent role in 1945 in resisting Maramureş' unification with sub-Carpathian Ukraine that had been proposed under the guise of land reform.[4] Then, in 1948, one of the village's Uniate or Eastern Catholic priests, Dunca Ion Joldea, who had been instrumental in the 1945 resistance, was again at the forefront in resisting the Uniate Church's unification with the Orthodox Church. His leadership role in this struggle added another negative to Ieud's troubled profile. As was reported: "Upon the unification of the two churches and especially afterward, in Ieud, there has been strong resistance on the part of the population."[5]

Father Joldea was also the Vice President of Iuliu Maniu's Peasant Party in Maramureş. He was further charged with being the "spiritual leader" of the Popşa gang, one of several counter-revolutionary groups active in Maramureş. Ieudeni were claimed to have been the most numerous among this group's direct participants and/or supporters, although quite a number of fugitives from the community hiding in the surrounding mountains were also associated with the Pop Achim gang, which operated largely in the nearby region of Tîrgu Lapuş. The list of Ieud's "bandits" was long and diverse, including members of terrorist groups, religious resisters, army deserters, wealthy peasants who had not paid their taxes or provided the quotas on goods set them, Legionaries and the like. Some 115 Ieudeni were imprisoned, of whom three were known to have been shot by government forces, and five to have perished in prison.[6] To round out Ieud's problematic socio-political profile, it was known locally and regionally as a village that boasted of producing intellectuals, including priests, writers, artists

and teachers.[7] The Land Reform of 1945 marked one of several fundamental steps in creating a socialist economy.[8] In Ieud, 124 inhabitants benefited from the redistribution of land that involved "52 household plots and 72 plots for cultivation… totaling roughly 76 yokes of expropriated property."[9] Yet, the land reform did little to alleviate the deepening crisis of poverty and hunger throughout the region. Plagued by infrastructural problems, local and regional leaders lacked the means to respond effectively. As part of the process of centralizing production and redistribution, the land reform was also meant to provide the State with reserves for redistribution that nonetheless remained unavailable in Maramureş. Leaders pleaded with the central authorities to release supplies of all sorts. Urgent messages were sent to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Public Domain, pointing out:

> In that now the final touches of the agrarian reform are being made, it is the last chance for us to acquire state reserves that are so badly needed in this region, backward from every point of view.[10]

On January 7, 1947, the Director of the Economic Bureau of the Maramureş administrative region wrote to the Grain Division of the Department of State Provisioning (*Direcția generală a cerealelor*, *Secretariatul de stat pentru aprovizionare*), requesting 10 train wagons of corn:

> There is unrest in the villages due to starvation… The situation has become alarming, as those who are starving threaten to revolt if they don't get bread… So that starvation does not paralyze the life of the entire region and provoke massacres, mass revolts and population exodus, a distribution of grain is urgently needed for the region's starving population… Should this not happen, we cannot take responsibility for the starvation that is spreading around our region, nor for the consequences that starvation will provoke.[11]

In 1946, it was estimated that 70 percent of the 3,135 Ieudeni were starving, 25 percent were insufficiently fed, and only 5 percent had enough to eat throughout the entire year. In only one of 55 villages for which reports are available—Câmpulung la Tisa—did half of the population have adequate food supplies for the course of a year.[12]

Clearly, creating a centralized economy was easier to accomplish on paper than in actuality. Implementing the means to achieve this goal required transforming daily micro-economic practices. The following example illustrates what such changes entailed, suggesting the enormous difficulties that planners and everyday citizens confronted in all domains of economic exchange. To the extent that private commerce was criminalized, the State had to meet supply and distribution needs. Yet, as indicated above, it did not and indeed could not. On February 17, 1947, an urgent request for 50,000 pairs of peasant sandals was sent to the Leather Division of the Department of Provisioning (SSA), noting:

> Peasants from the villages are barefoot and, without sandals, are no longer able to go to work. For this same reason, those working in forestry cannot continue, the workers refusing to work without sandals…[13]

This shortage was ongoing, making the supply of leather sandals irregular. In 1948, V.A., in need of sandals for her children, was apprehended in the Sighet market shortly after showing her husband the three pairs that she had just bought from a tanner at 200 lei each. The local authorities inquired whether she understood that private commerce was against the law and ordered her to lead the way to the tanner guilty of clandestine economic activity. Private purchase of plum brandy, meat, cornmeal or any other item was against the laws of socialist production and distribution, as was the private use of mills, the slaughtering of animals and related activities.[14] Private sales were considered a form of "sabotage" against the state. Learning the rules of a command economy—as well as how to get around them—took time. Examining such micro-practices reveals the very process by which the socialist economy was instituted in daily life.

To ensure adequate provisioning of Romania's population and to provide its war reparations to the Soviet Union, the Party instituted the collection of obligatory quotas, or *cote*, across the country.[15] The collection of these vital supplies also served as an important mechanism through which to promote class warfare and, in turn, to transform class relations. Quotas were differentiated by class categories (to be discussed below): poor peasants donated the least; middle peasants, more; wealthy peasants or *chiaburi*, the most. Quotas were applied to the latter as a means to "break their will [or backs]" and force their "consent" to the regime. The quantities of wool, milk, eggs, and meat that wealthy peasants were expected to deliver to the state, especially in the early years of the collections, were so exaggerated that most could not possibly meet their obligations, thereby placing them in violation of the law. As an 82 year-old former *chiabur* explained:

> They imposed a very high quota. You received a small notebook in which every quantity—of meat, wheat, barley, corn—was listed. They knew that no one could possibly give that much, so then they could say you were engaged in sabotage, and they locked you up. There was no one to whom to ask why the amounts were so high. The children of wealthy peasants no longer had the right to go to school.[16]

An "agricultural tax" functioned similarly, with the wealthy again being taxed beyond their means to pay. As one "strictly secret" document that circulated at the administrative regional level in 1949 noted:

> The new law on agricultural taxes is formulated according to political interests: to protect poor and middle peasants and to deal a strong blow to the

> wealthy. This law is applied in the context of increasing class warfare in the villages. Wealthy peasants who are affected by this law nonetheless try to deceive the masses about the law's content.[17]

There were myriad ways in which wealthy peasants and others attempted to evade both quotas and taxes. Some, under the cover of night, hid cornmeal and other goods in the cellars of trusted friends and relatives who were themselves willing to bear the risk of discovery. Others tried to hide their property, declaring that they had less land or fewer animals (often having sent them to a relative in another locale). Those unable to meet the ever-changing, gradated quotas often retreated to the mountains where they joined the mix of fugitives mentioned above, among whom were explicitly anti-communist "politicals," including Uniate priests unwilling to convert, army deserters, and the like. Although lumped together as anti-communist, those in hiding often differed in their motives and political views, some lacking the latter in any clearly formulated way. It should be mentioned that with men hiding in the mountains for periods of days, weeks, months, and years, women bore the burden of managing their families and the authorities.

"Good" communist citizens were admonished to be vigilant in the search for saboteurs. The regional newspaper, *Graiul Maramureşului* (The Talk of Maramureş) warned: "Peasant workers must be ever vigilant in their efforts to discover and expose all of the wealthy peasants' [*chiaburi*'s] attempts to impede the struggle for a better life."[18] Those who attempted to undermine the regime's progress were publicly denounced. For example, again as reported in the regional newspaper, *Graiul*:

> The *chiabur*, F. I. C. [from Ieud] tried to avoid providing the wool quota. Although he has 42 sheep, he declared only 15 and that he is a middle peasant. He sent 27 of his sheep to his brother in the village Botiza to hide them. But his ruse was discovered in time by the vigilance of those who work [for a living]…[19]

Or, as revealed in another short article, "The exposure of new wealthy scoundrels":

> A few days ago, the collector for the DAC who had gone to Ieud to collect wool discovered 2 kg. of dirt and rags in the wool handed in by one deceiving wealthy peasant woman… Another tried weighting her wool with salt, but worker-peasants discovered this in time and exposed her.[20]

Similar discoveries were publicized about wealthy peasants who tried to evade paying taxes on their property. One packed the family's valuables in a chest and hid it in the barn, "…believing that he could fool the collector. But he only fooled himself, his ugly deed exposed by the poor peasantry; a fiscal agent found the chest in the barn."[21]

Those responsible for collections of produce or taxes included the overly zealous who sought to empty the *chiaburi's* cupboards as well as those "who were decent, who did not fleece you." The latter turned a blind eye, collecting most but leaving just enough for *chiaburi* to feed the children something. As in all walks of life, there were "good" or "bad" collectors and fiscal agents. As described by one former wealthy peasant woman, then a 78 year old widow: "you weren't able to pay your taxes; they took the shirt off your back, the bedsheets, everything…" Another, a former collector now deceased, added: "[they took] everything fine from the house—the rug, the thickest woven woolen blanket…" The methods used to enforce compliance were perceived to be arbitrary in application. As a peasant woman in her late sixties related: "Whom they wanted to destroy, they did; whom not, they didn't." At age ten, she and her three siblings lost their mother because of the family's grain quota. Their father, unable to provide it, was in hiding; therefore, the authorities pressured his wife to deliver the wheat, resulting in tragedy:

> That was in '49… they took mama to the town hall to turn over our wheat. "I will not give it," she said. "Let my husband do so, he is the head of the household," and so they beat her, and she was six months pregnant. My mother died… and we four children were left motherless. That's how it was.[22]

Because the collections required people to deliver the results of their hard labor to the state, many people associated the collections with collectivization itself. Yet, as the first head of the collective farm, in his mid-eighties and no longer living in Maramureş, pointed out:

> The collective farm had nothing to do with the collections. The quotas were collected at the reception center in Rozavlea and were the local village council's responsibility. The collective gave the land to collective farmers, amalgamating it in one place, and adding land from the Church, and then, from S.B., a wealthy peasant who had some 80 hectares. And they also took land from wealthy peasants who did not pay their taxes in compliance with Law 115. But only the local village council and financial section had anything to do with the quotas.[23]

Moreover, as a former collector clarified: "No one was arrested for the collective, only for something else, they didn't provide their quota of grain…"

The technical distinction between collections and collectivization notwithstanding, people's experiences fueled their misunderstanding. The products of their labor as well as the land on which production was carried out were intricately intertwined for most. Obligatory collections by the state undermined wealthier peasants' sense of self, subordinating their family and self interests to those of the Party. As a popular verse lamented:

> The plow is heavy, the quotas are heavy, and bitter are my days. The sack between my leggings is empty. My wife asks, "Hey, my man, what will we eat, when we give the quota for meat? For pork?" God, don't give them good luck, the quota for beef. Life is hard.[24] [See Appendix.]

In addition to collections, the state needed land for large-scale agricultural production. To this end, they encouraged forms of cooperative agricultural production known as *întovărăşire* or voluntary associations.[25] P.V., then 82 but now deceased, noted: "*Întovărăşirea*? You know what that was for? To attract people more easily into the collective farm. That was the aim… We worked voluntarily, not according to a production norm." A former First Secretary of the Maramureş region, in his eighties, emphasized that:

> In a voluntary association, each person would join with his land and whatever material means he had. They divided the products of their labor proportionally. The state was more involved in the agricultural production cooperative. The products of labor were divided according to the number of days worked… So, there was a difference: in the one, you were paid according to your work; in the other, according to your landholdings and less so by your work.[26]

Although such voluntary associations were predominant in much of Maramureş, paving the way for the finalization of collectivization in 1962, this had not been the case in Ieud. In contrast to work "without standardized production norms" in the voluntary associations, in the collective, people worked with production norms for all phases of production. Thus:

> For plowing, it was 30 *ari* [sg. Arie: faction of a hectare, 1/1000] per production norm; digging, 14; haying, 50 *ari*… A strong man could meet the production norms, I'm speaking about here where working the land is tough. For a weaker man, it was hard to meet the norm. And you were paid according to these norms, so you tried to work as much as possible. Of course, working so much, you also worked poorly. That's why production was so bad… From year to year, the harvest was worse and worse. And it is from this that lying was born, because in many cases, you couldn't finish on time, so not to be sanctioned, you declared that you finished your work on time. Lying also grew out of reporting false production amounts. In the end, lies have come to dominate…[27]

Regardless of the form—voluntary association or institutionalized agricultural production—contiguous plots of land were crucial for modernized, large-scale agriculture. To this end, two means of acquiring land for such purposes were introduced: confiscations, and the merging or *comasarea* of land.[28] Not surpris-

ingly, they also aimed at transforming class relations. Land was outright confiscated from wealthy peasants. It was also "given in exchange." The semantic nuances between "land taken" (*pământ luat*) and land "given" (*dat*) were lost on those whose land was exchanged. According to a report in February 1950,

> 60 poor and middle peasants freely accepted the exchange of land. The others who are under the influence of wealthy peasants refuse to sign… For working peasants, they are guaranteed land in exchange that is of the same quality and quantity. For the wealthy peasants, they received the poorest land up in the hills, meaning that the best land fell to the working class…[29]

Wealthy peasants retained roughly the amount of property they had, but they lost significantly in its quality and location. Reports that updated progress and problems associated with the merging of land noted that "the reason that the exchange of land is so difficult lies in the history of Ieud from 1945 on. This community has 44 *chiaburi* who, since 1945, have permanently opposed measures taken by our regime."[30]

"*Chiabur*" was the label attached to propertied, wealthy peasants, signifying the equivalent of the Soviet *kulak*. In Ieud, most *chiaburi* did not possess the 50 ha that were specified in the Land Reform of 1945. Rather, they generally possessed 12–25 ha. As one 86 year-old peasant, himself formerly a *chiabur*, explained: "The regime introduced this word. We didn't know what a *chiabur* was." Before, "peasants who were better off were called '*gazde*' or '*bogătani*' [rich people]," the former First Secretary explained. He continued on about the definition of *chiabur*:[31]

> There was a limit, from so many to so many days worked with the paid help of others… It was an absurdity, not normal. No one considered anyone a *chiabur* in the way the Party intended. You can't define a man as being something out of the ordinary because he employed the help of who knows whom for 30 days or more. But they [Party leaders] needed to find a reason to label them exploiters.

Exploitation was key to the promotion of class warfare. Social relations had to be transformed through class-consciousness of class exploitation. However, convincing people to change their understanding of what had long seemed a "natural order of daily life" was not easy, especially in Ieud. The official dividing line for many of those labeled *chiabur* was their exploitation of labor for thirty or more days annually or ownership of means of production.[32] But as a former collector of quotas commented: "Peasant *chiaburi* worked along with their servants. They did not hang around with their hands in their pockets, no…" Another former wealthy peasant, in his mid-eighties, elaborated:

> If a man had a lot of land that he couldn't work alone, then he hired poor peasants as servants. Here, there was a class warfare when those who had been servants rose against the wealthier peasants. "Look, you, that *chiabur*, he exploited you!" So that one would hate the other. The poor who had worked for "*gazde*" were the first to join the collective. They told them: "Hey, we'll take their land and it will be yours, you'll work here just by the village and we'll send them to work up in the hills, far off."[33]

How "class warfare" resonated among Ieudeni depended on their socio-economic position.[34] Poor peasants who had been servants spoke bitterly about *gazde* and class disparities. They and former *chiaburi* alike agreed that while most of those labeled wealthy peasants worked hard along beside their workers, there nevertheless had been some "bad" *chiaburi* who mistreated their workers. Poor peasants who were sent to the Party school reminisced about learning of class warfare and exploitation, and then returning to their village motivated to seek justice.[35] One person in his eighties who had been a servant asked rhetorically, "what did *gazde* ever do since the world was created? Nothing… everything they did, they did for themselves." He added that the communists created schools, promoted education for all, etc. Class exploitation had been explained and embraced.

Gazde, by contrast, represented themselves, and were often represented by even poor peasants, as having been "good people who were esteemed." One former wealthy peasant woman in her late seventies reflected:

> A good person is someone who is sensible, who reasons about things, who respects everyone, no matter their status; he had goodness in him… if a poor person helped you, you didn't take advantage of him, you paid him what he was owed. People educated their kids then, not like now.

Yet *gazde* were the first to be denounced as *chiaburi*, a category that expanded over time (see below). While that expansion was in response to directives from Bucharest (see Robert Levy, this volume), the criteria applied at the local level were often determined more by personal grudges than official guidelines.[36] As a former member of the Ministry of Agriculture's State Commission for Planning, himself from Maramureş (and in his nineties), pointed out: "the laws were written in a civilized form, very nice, but how they were applied was another matter. It isn't all the same what was written on paper and what happened…"[37] Central authorities sought to control such abuses, demanding justification for what they felt were inadequately substantiated categorizations of alleged *chiaburi.* To illustrate, in an exchange between center and periphery, the former questioned Ieud authorities about two individuals who had been labeled *chiaburi*, requiring more detailed information about their situations. They admonished the local Party representatives that:

> If the persons named were designated *chiaburi* based only on their wealth, then you have committed a grave abuse of the Party line… Those named, if they do not possess means of exploitation, then they are poor or middle peasants, given that they have large families and live in a mountainous region where the land is poor… In our work, we have to use all our force and the laws of proletarian dictatorship against the *chiaburi*, but not against poor or middle peasants under any circumstances…[38]

The response made clear that the two had been rightly categorized: "D.I. is part of the exploiting class [which exploits labor more than 30 days in the year]; D.V. has 6 hectares of land of the best quality, a cow, 2 horses, 12 sheep, a thresher, a mill, a small timber mill operated by water."[39] Here, it is important to emphasize the elasticity of the category "*chiabur*." When necessary, it was easily confounded with a broad definition of "enemies of socialism." In the same initial inquiry to Ieud's authorities, a qualification was added: if a poor or middle peasant "has a past hostile to the democratic regime, was the leader of one of the historic parties [Liberal Party, Peasant Party], or of the Legionary-Fascist Party, was knowingly involved in anti-communist activities…," that person could be legitimately re-classified as an "enemy." In view of Ieud's history, this qualification was widely invoked.[40]

Class warfare was the principal weapon that transformed neighbors, godparents, and even family members into "enemies" and "exploiters." This powerful discourse legitimated the ongoing inversion of social relations, demarcated in time and space with a visible symbolic impact. *Chiaburi* who were not hiding in the mountains were publicly ridiculed as they trudged long distances to poor terrain. They were subjected to local abuses, often brutal in nature. Yet, as noted previously, covered by darkness, loyal poor peasants risked bringing food for the families of *chiaburi* whose stocks had been demolished by increasing requisitions, or risked hiding what they could of grain and flour for them. Appearances and everyday practices were not "transparent."[41] Nonetheless, class warfare, relentless in invocation and application, enticed a small number of poor and middle peasants into the burgeoning collective farm.

2. COLLECTIVIZATION AND CLASS WARFARE

> In constructing socialism, through well-organized work done together and shared means of production, the goal sought by the members united in the collective farm is to assure our victory over the wealthy peasants, exploiters and enemies of the working people, to do away forever with the darkness and backwardness of small individual farms and to obtain instead the most production possible.[42]

On March 5, 1950, the GAC "Scînteia" (or the Collective Farm "The Spark") was inaugurated in Ieud.[43] In preparation for the GAC's creation, the following information about Ieud's human and material resources was forwarded to regional and central authorities: Ieud had 112 poor peasants, 109 worker peasants, 489 middle peasants, and 42 wealthy peasants, among whom were 727 Romanians, 1 Hungarian, and 19 Gypsies (*Rromi*).[44] There were 1,704 ha of arable land, 3,128 ha of hayfields, 150 ha of orchards, 2,510 ha of forest land and 159 ha of fallow land (totalling 7,651 ha). Prior to March 5, 1950, 88 poor peasants, 29 middle peasants and 1 landless peasant had joined the GAC "of their own free will." Of these 118 GAC members, 117 were Romanians and 1 was Hungarian, with 236 workhands available (i.e., 118 workers with two arms each); other reports also mention one Gypsy. The GAC had a total of 144 ha of arable land (out of 1,704 ha), with 28 ha of hayfields and 2 ha of orchards.[45] Most who joined the GAC had less than 1 ha of arable land although three members had more than this. One of them had 4.5 ha.

As noted in the applications, the original members joined the collective "of their own free will." Political activists employed varied methods, ranging from persuasion to coercion, to convince them of the benefits that would ensue. Members of the Ploughman's Front promised: "We will conduct an intense campaign to persuade members of our organization to join the collective, demonstrating to them that this is the only certain path to a better life free of exploitation…"[46]

Diverse forms of propaganda assured poor peasants that they would no longer suffer if they joined the collective. Otherwise, they were led to believe, wealthy peasants would unite with the Americans and they, the poor peasants, would still "eat with a ladle out of a shared bowl."[47] *Graiul Maramureşului,* the regional newspaper quoted above, relentlessly extolled the virtues of communism and collectivization while "unmasking" and denouncing those who tried to undermine their inevitable victory. Pro-collectivization songs such as the "Song about the life of Ieud's collective farmers" were performed in public meetings and published in the national Party newspaper, *Scînteia*.[48]

> Spring is coming and the whole country is in bloom
> So are the fields and our collective.
> Come on, let's work, brother, if we want to have our share
> Come on, comrades, faster, so Ieud will be in the lead
> And let's fence in the *chiaburi*, and we will live well.

"Wall newspapers" displayed in the village center called attention to "good deeds and bad ones."[49] These wall posters served as a medium through which to construct and instill communist morality, rewarding "good" citizens and exposing "bad" ones. As one "Activity Report" of the Provisional Region of the Iza administrative area stated: "Wall newspapers… play an important role. Look at the example of the wall paper in Cuhea [a neighboring community], where the edito-

rial committee takes care to change articles weekly, exposing abusers, writing about the organization of work for threshing, harvesting…"[50]

The Party created educational opportunities and activities to raise socialist consciousness, as well as the cultural and political knowledge of Party administrators and collective members alike. The local school library was filled with manuals explaining scientific approaches to agricultural endeavors. In the school, each class had its own small plot of land where students learned to cultivate what they planted. They competed in early forms of what were later institutionalized as socialist competitions. Study groups of all kinds were formed. The regional "Propaganda and Agitation Section" of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP) Baia Mare, for example, reported that 156 persons participated in 18 groups studying Comrade Stalin's biography.[51]

Of urgent importance among the Party's educational initiatives was the eradication of illiteracy. A report dated January 2, 1951 claimed that there were 19,727 illiterate persons in the villages of the Vişeu region alone.[52] Illiteracy posed special problems for local Party leaders who were encouraged to attend courses if they did not know how to read and write.[53] Only two of four members of the GAC Scînteia's organizing cell could do so.[54] Yet, persons holding positions in the Party and GAC were expected to read the national Party newspaper each morning before coming to work so that they would be well informed about, or indoctrinated in, socialist transformation.[55]

According to the member of the State Commission for Planning, in the early period, the Party preferred "half-educated poor peasants." He added that many of the country's intellectuals, urban and rural, were then incarcerated in prisons, labor camps or Romania's dreaded Canal project. Whether preferred or not, after WWII, there were no technical cadre. The cadres with whom collectivization began had attended agricultural schools requiring four years of primary school, then four more of agricultural training. He insisted that it had also been instrumental to use poor peasants in those early years because they had received a few hectares after the Land Reform of 1945 and feared that they would lose them if they did not carry out Party directives.

With Ieud's reputation as a village from whence intellectuals came, the new "leadership" was all the more galling to wealthy peasants and many others as well. It was widely held that:

> The top authorities, all were uneducated; those who were educated were pushed aside; everywhere they placed people without much schooling… But after he entered school, then he was proud and claimed that he had been unable to go to school because of poverty, not that he had flunked out…[56]

An 82 year-old former poor peasant commented more colorfully: "Let me tell you, people were poorly trained, with those seven grades as a child that they didn't do. Well, and then, with the communists, he had to learn too much material all at

once and he went crazy. His mind caught on fire!"[57] One former *chiabur* remarked that D.G., an intellectual from Ieud who had become a Party activist and museum director in the city of Cluj, had tried in vain to convince him and others to join the Party, allegedly so that the Party would not have to resort to "uneducated people."[58]

In the GAC's first years, *chiaburi* were deliberately excluded. As "enemies of socialism" by definition, it was assumed they would try to subvert socialism's goals. Those poor and middle peasants who did join "of their own free will" were first required to submit a written petition asking the leadership to accept them; it was then reviewed to make certain that the applicants met the criteria for approval. These petitions constituted a less scrutinized legal-administrative practice that reflected hierarchies of power and categories of personhood. Their style revealed discursive forms of subservience to the new authorities. For example, the first president of the GAC claimed that he never accepted anyone who had not submitted a handwritten application, an assertion that was not entirely accurate.[59] In those years, all petitions were copied according to several models. Keeping the illiteracy rate in mind, many of the hand-written pages were written by a member of the GAC's leadership team, a peasant woman who herself had learned to write but not, she volunteered, to read.[60] These formulaic petitions all contained clear expressions of gratitude to the Party, expressing the sincere hope that the petition would be accepted. Each was signed with classic slogans such as "We fight for peace," "Long live the GAC," and, of course, "Long live the Soviet Union, the stronghold of Peace, Liberty, and People's Liberation, with its flagbearer in the fight for peace, I.V. Stalin!"[61] A former wealthy peasant, in his late seventies who had never joined the collective, insightfully questioned the very meaning of such petitions: "It's obligatory to write a petition to enter the collective? But if it's a petition, then it isn't obligatory, but if it's obligatory, then it isn't a petition." "Free will" was a matter of interpretation.

With or without it, the GAC Scînteia was created. Several months later, another GAC was inaugurated in Săliştea, also in the Vişeu region. Together, in 1950, the number of households in the region that belonged to collective farms represented 1.02 percent of the population.[62]

Over the months and years, regular and required reports sent up the Party hierarchy praised, indeed glorified, the progress and successes of the GAC and its collective members. These included declarations such as: "To date, we are unaware of cases of producers who have not disclosed the total amount of land they possess," "The class enemy to date has not made any trouble of any kind, but should this happen, we will immediately notify the regional authorities" and "Even though the collective has had a series of problems, honest people have worked earnestly to obtain good results that serve as an example to all working peasants in our village and in those nearby."[63] However, the voluminous penal files, interviews, and other Party reports addressing "Difficulties" or "Failings and Weaknesses" contradict the institutional inflation that distorted what was happening in everyday life. The "official" public picture looked much rosier than

the evidently more complicated process of creating both communist authority and the GAC.

Infrastructural problems affected most domains of production and distribution from the start. Inadequate storage facilities were but one example. Once collected, hay, potatoes, grain, and the like too often rotted instead of being stored for redistribution, and milk soured before it reached collection stations.[64] Not least, agricultural specialists were frequently unable to offer timely advice as they lacked sufficient transportation to travel around the region to improve on "our agricultural *naiveté* in using the means of production…"[65] Other infrastructural problems pertained to human capital: work remained unfinished because of insufficient "work hands." Not only did local leaders need to learn to read and write, but they also were expected to set an example of what may be labeled "communist morality" in the making. Yet, Party reports and self-criticisms are replete with statements about irresponsible behavior on the part of members of the Party cell who drank heavily (including on the job), womanized, were regularly late to meetings or to open the cooperative store, failed to raise the level of women in political activity, failed to pay their dues, etc. Such behavior compromised both "proletarian morality" and "our Party."[66]

In addition, and contrary to the above-cited claim, "enemies" continued to engage actively in sabotage against the regime and the GAC, both before and after the latter's inception. The regional RWP emphasized that, since 1945, Ieud's *chiaburi*: "have been permanently opposed to measures taken by our regime… We must find ways to smash completely the *chiaburi*'s resistance, using political persuasion, exposing them before working peasants, and applying administrative measures…"[67]

Progress in "the work of persuasion" was seriously impeded by *chiaburi* who continued to resist delivering their quotas, both before the GAC's inauguration and until the official completion of collectivization in 1962. Recall that after their land was confiscated, most were unable to fulfill the impossibly high quotas assigned to them.[68] While propaganda preached the virtues of the GAC, "the *chiaburi* implore susceptible middle peasants not to agree to the exchange of land, thereby impeding the inauguration of the collective."[69] Or, "there is a rumor circulating that the sky will darken and it will rain fire. The result of this… they've bought candles…"[70] Another *chiabur* allegedly threatened that "using an axe, he will cut into pieces whoever goes near his property." He was similarly accused of frightening poor peasants that if they joined the collective, they would die of hunger, unable even to buy cornmeal. Or, as yet another wealthy peasant claimed, "all who join the collective will be taken to Siberia."[71] Fugitives, *chiaburi,* and Uniate priests spread false rumors that the Americans were allegedly coming to save them from the Russians just as they had, in the end, saved Europe from Hitler, and that those who joined the GAC would then see what would happen to their collective.[72] They instructed poor and middle peasants to resist the production plans for all phases, e.g., planting and harvesting on time.[73] Even the village midwife "who received a salary from the state" had allegedly told a poor

peasant woman, suffering from an eye problem, "who had joined the collective that if she did not withdraw from it, she would go blind!"[74]

To be sure, the priest, Dunca Ioan Joldea, was blamed for agitating against the GAC. But he was not alone in his quest, particularly with respect to the Greek Catholic Church. Throughout the region, "as a result of the propaganda promoted by the religious sects and their actions, poor and middle peasants do not trust the present regime."[75] To counteract these strong influences in villages "where mysticism is still evident, they should read the brochure: 'Superstition, the fruit of ignorance that blocks progress.'"[76]

As suggested, such "enemy activities" continued until collectivization was declared completed in 1962. After the first phase ended more or less in 1952, which coincided with the incarceration or death of the "most wanted" fugitives—priests, *chiaburi*, and reactionaries among them—things quieted down. Local infrastructural problems, including the delivery of quotas, continued. Moreover, after 1952, wealthy peasants petitioned to be removed from the "*chiabur* list" that had been much expanded from its original number, 44.[77] While some *chiaburi* were indeed removed, Ieud's problematic history nevertheless remained a source of worry to local, regional and central authorities. Not surprisingly, in 1956, the Executive Committee of Ieud's Party requested advice from the Vişeu region's secret police: "We don't know what measures to take against them [the enemies] locally." To prevent the eruption of problems, those who had been given shorter prison sentences and/or had been released from prison were re-arrested.[78]

Throughout the years, daily life went on. Some, whether sooner or later, accommodated the exigencies of hard times, making compromises that enabled them to survive. Accordingly, they forged "a bit of friendship." That is, they paid the collector or other local officials "with cheese, plum brandy, whatever I had, and they lowered my quotas. What else could I do?"[79] Such compromises usually involved "bribes," recognizing the favor done at the risk of being found out. Herein was another micro-practice that institutionalized falsifying statistics, lying to and cheating the regime, practiced by its representatives and enemies alike. *Chiaburi* who continued to resist the relentless pressure to join the GAC often distinguished between degrees of compromises. Paying favors was one thing, necessitated by the system—"what else could I do?"—but to compromise one's personal sense of self was another matter. Each person interviewed, all men, as well as others talking about them, illustrated this nuanced difference by referring to the petitions to join the GAC. They claimed that a man who joined had to sign a statement: "I beg you to accept me… because I am unable to manage my affairs myself," when, in fact, he was.[80] To agree to such a statement meant to compromise their (manly) sense of self.

Yet, as heads of household, men often felt compelled to make compromises of one kind or another. They were officially and culturally responsible for the well-being of their families; in consequence, they usually bore the direct brunt of resisting collectivization. Most fugitives were men, as were those who served lengthy

prison sentences, or worked in labor camps at the Canal or in the mines. Women, by contrast, usually remained at home in their villages or towns. Not surprisingly, they often had different, gendered reactions to the pressures of the times. In almost all interviews, women were said to have been the most vocal and adamantly opposed to joining the GAC. Men often commented that women did not reason soundly and reacted emotionally. One man quoted his mother as having cursed him for considering the "invitation" to join the GAC: "Go to hell! I'm not going to give my house and whatever I have to the state. They're mine!"[81] Another told his wife he had signed the petition to join, and "it was a nonstop fight… you jerk, why did you join the collective, we'll die of hunger…"[82] Considering the extent to which women resisted collectivization and how they directly suffered the brunt of Ceauşescu's reproductive policies, it is ironic that, at the end of communist rule, women were also readily accused of having been complicitous with a regime that allegedly "liberated" them.

By the final phase of collectivization, roughly 1960–1962, the majority of those labeled *chiaburi* were worn down by years of hardship. Theirs were among the 300 petitions submitted upon the formation of the CAP, Ieud.[83] These application forms were markedly different than those submitted to join the GAC. Instead of being handwritten, they were typed, prepared statements into which numbers (i.e., how much arable land and other forms of property were being contributed) were filled in by hand. This time, no slogans praising Stalin (then deceased), the Communist Party, or peace were included. Ieud's capitulation—at last—was the regime's hard-won triumph in creating what was popularly known as the Valley of Socialist Labor (referring to the Iza Valley). In the process, as seen in this paper, class warfare turned class relations upside down, simultaneously transforming authority relations while creating communist authority in the micro-practices of daily life. As a former *chiabur*, highly respected, reflected:[84]

> They lied to us about what we'd get and we, the population, lied in turn. That's how theft was born because they promised that we'd receive whatever, which we didn't, and realizing that we didn't get what they had promised to be able to live, people began to steal from the CAP. Here in our village, the standard norm for a day's work was 14 lei, yet a meal at the cantina cost 12 lei. Given that, if you didn't steal, you couldn't survive because you can't live on one meal a day. And because of that, people were forced to steal and, in the end, without any reservation. So the saying "to know how to get by." But he who knows how to get by is a liar, a thief, and two-faced. With honest work, you can't do anything except survive minimally and even then, not really.

Lying and stealing became the trademarks of everyday life. But "to know how to get by" meant that citizens compromised themselves. If communist morality was constituted through the increasing disjunction between its discourses and practices, so participation in such disjunctive patterns of thought and behavior com-

promised individual ethics and personhood itself. In the end, the construction of communist authority and class warfare contained the very seeds of their eventual demise.[85]

3. REMEMBERING COLLECTIVIZATION

As an active campaign to create socialist rule and socialist practices, collectivization was "completed" in 1962. Reflecting on that period was, for some, a bitter experience: as much about what had happened to themselves, their families and community as about their own actions at that time. In retrospect, more than a few formerly wealthy peasants observed that resisting collectivization had been a mistake. What did they get out of it? With regret, quite a number of former resisters acknowledged that D.G., previously mentioned, had been prescient in his attempts to convince them to support the Party and its programs because "that's exactly how things unfolded, step by step, as he said they would."[86]

Those who joined in 1950 had an easier time throughout the years of communist rule: "[they] divided cheese, sheep, everything, among themselves; they didn't have to give so much to the state." Those who refused added that, had they joined, they would today have pensions, however minimal. Most who did not join the GAC nonetheless contracted annually with the state. They sold cheese, meat, wool, sheep, and other produce to the state at state prices. This did not, however, entail a "work permit" that formalized the relationship between the individual selling to the state and the state's obligation to him. Such persons had been lead to understand that since they contributed regularly to the state, they would receive pensions. They felt deceived by everyone—then and now.[87]

A *chiabur* who survived the communist era by contracting with the state and doing seasonal migrant labor for long periods of time lodged a plea with the National Peasant Party in the early nineties. To his astonishment, he was told at their party headquarters in Bucharest that he had made a serious mistake by not having joined the collective. Had he joned, he would today have a pension! (He resigned from the Peasant Party after this encounter.) Disillusioned, he remarked that having stood on principle in retrospect held few rewards for him or his family.[88]

Another domain of practices that, upon reflection, were not perceived as having been as unproblematic as they had seemed at the time pertains to "hiding" property. Several confessed that while having hidden the number of sheep they then owned may have been beneficial at the time, when the regime came to an end, they could only claim what had been recorded. This also applied to hiding land so as not to pay taxes, which has lead to difficulties today in making property claims. The past haunts the present in unanticipated ways.

Others who had benefited from collectivization—receiving land, power, and even prestige—did not, with hindsight, necessarily reflect positively upon it. For example, D.V., a former president of the GAC, asserted that Ieud should not have been collectivized:

> Because the land was too poor for a collective. No matter how much you struggled with a tractor—the village has approximately 5,000 hectares of land, of which only some 400 hectares are arable, the rest being hayfields and forests. From what do you get a yield, from where?… It was a big mistake that they made that collective. There was no way that it could produce results.[89]

He added that Ieud was collectivized because: "There was a power struggle. They were against communism and communism wanted to eradicate misery and the exploitation of man by man."

To make sense of the past, and their actions during that period, many people relativize their deeds, or suggest, upon reflection, that perhaps things were not as they then believed. One high ranking regional official, in response to my direct question about abuses of the period, said that he would be dishonest if he said he had doubted his actions then. He believed in and did not question what he and his comrades did at the time. However, today he admits that "we made some mistakes." Or, as S.B., a former middle peasant, commented after a lengthy discussion about compromises that made it possible for him and his family to survive: "Come on, let's be honest. If you knew how to get by, then you screwed someone else." Still others who spent years in prisons, who survived the Canal, torture and the like, located their fortitude in their religious faith and strong upbringing as "good people." In one way or another, almost everyone recognized that there is a complex relationship between their experiences as individuals and the transformation of property and power relations that shaped their lives and senses of self and that, conversely, shaped the parameters of Party rule locally, regionally and nationally. Moreover, many interviewed—whether a Party official, a *chiabur*, or poor peasant—suggested that their local history had as much to do with the particularities of national history as they "lived" it as not. In short, within the limits of communist authority, not everything resulted from center-to-periphery directives, but rather from their translation, implementation, and negotiation in lived experiences.

4. POSTSCRIPT

This paper sheds light on the process by which communist authority was created and institutionalized through collectivization in Ieud, Maramureş. As demonstrated, political interests dominated economic ones. In the end, Ieud, like the rest of Maramureş, was not fully collectivized. That had never seemingly been the intention. The land across the region was generally of quite poor quality. In the Cosău and Mara valleys, there was less land to merge to yield larger areas for production. Many of their residents lived off of the local economy, with family members working in the nearby town of Sighet. In the Iza and Vişeu valleys, by contrast, where there was technically more contiguous flat land to develop but also poor soil quality, their inhabitants could not live off of it as a primary resource.

Then, and now, families survived on mixed economic strategies that involved seasonal migrant labor of greater or lesser duration.[90] Yet, those valleys became the "Valley of Socialist Agriculture." My research into the process of collectivization in Ieud, in particular, and in "historic" Maramureş in general, concludes that collectivization—where and when—correlated highly with the degree and forms of resistance against communist rule. That is, in communities where communist authorities perceived the bourgeois past to be a significant impediment to the socialist future, collectivization was used as a disciplinary measure. Ieud, with its diverse political and religious "reactionaries," was first and foremost among such communities. As to the others that soon followed, ongoing analysis will determine the extent to which their pasts weighed heavily on their futures, as preliminary analysis suggests. For example, where Uniate priests actively resisted unification with the Orthodox Church, collectivization was more insistently pursued to impose the will of the Party.[91] Class warfare in its different forms was a most effective weapon—in discourse and in deed.

APPENDIX: POPULAR POETRY

The following are translations of rhymed verses. (The translations are not, however, in rhyme.) The first four are composed by peasants. "Persuasion Work" is the only one of these that was written (in a notebook); the others were recorded and transcribed. The last are "official" pro-collectivization examples.

1. A Wealthy Peasant's Song
Recorded from Suzana Balea, aged 71, female, peasant, Ieud, Maramureş, 2000.

For as long as I lived with my mother
I was a young girl [then]
Like a swallow's chick
And dear to everyone.
As long as I was [young and unmarried]
I was very pampered
And all the boys were after me
Because in our [yard]
There used to be horses and there used to be oxen
And lots of sheep.
There used to be cows
And we were all healthy.
We didn't know any harm.
God had given us plenty.

There was a mill and a timber cutter,
A thresher.
My father was secretary to the village council,
My uncles, all [gentle]men with education,
My mother, the village midwife.
My father brought [electrical] light
For the first time to our village.
He set up the plant
And bought oil for it.
Nowhere was there electricity
Like we had in our village.
Only in the city
Was the light bulb as bright as in my house.
And when I got married
I chose a young man from our village,
Handsome and wealthy,
Young and pleasant,
Handsome and pleasing
And as tall as a fir tree.
There was no other like him in the village.
And filled with goodness.
I hadn't seen another like him in the villages
And so good-hearted
I don't know anyone like him.
But the world changed
And we came in harm's way a lot.
It changed so that
The last became the first
The last came to rule
The first suffered;
The first—jailed
The last—head of the village.
Since the world changed,
They took all of ours
And put them in jail.
They took everything in our home.
They swept my attic clean.
They left no wheat nor straw,
No sheep in the sheepfold.
No oxen left, no horses,
Not even a mug of cornmeal.
They didn't take them all at once;
Today a horse, tomorrow a cow;
Today 40 sheep,

The day after tomorrow a pair of oxen.
Until there was nothing left.
They took everything to IRIC.
We kept hearing rumors
That it will soon be over
That in a month
The Americans will come to our country.
In a month, in a year
They will come across the ocean,
They will come and save us.
Make it as it used to be.
But years and years passed
And we ended up poor
Without cows and oxen,
Nothing but troubles.
We lived to see a time
When we had nothing to eat.
Quotas and taxes kept growing.
No one cared
That you didn't have anything to eat
And you couldn't pay.
They kept coming,
Coming to force you
To give them your share.
But, God, how can you give them
When you don't have anything?
Stables, barns, and attic, empty
And in the house not even a blanket,
No cover on the bed
Oh God, what am I to do?
'Cause my husband's in jail,
My children ask me for food,
And you have nothing to give them:
There's no corn flower left;
There's no milk 'cause there are no cows;
'Cause they took everything from us.
Wheat, potatoes they took away.
They swept my attic clean
I ran through the village
And I got all sorts of things
From people in the village
Who didn't have heavy taxes
And who had paid already.
I fed my children,

I didn't let them starve,
But when it was the hardest
I didn't know what to do.
But it was God's almighty will:
That evil Stalin,
Evil and cursed,
The devil came and took him.
I think he threw him in hell.
He took him and he died.
Ştefan came home.
The evil grew less.
He went to Butin and worked.
We bought a cow again
We worked really hard.
Day and night, always.
We took down the old house
We raised a new one in its place.
We had two cows again.
We made blankets.
We had horses again in our stable.
We wanted to have all we needed,
But, see, it wasn't possible
For people to accomplish what they wanted.
I wanted to be *gazda* again.
To have two plows in the field,
To have horses and to have oxen
And the sheepfold full of sheep again.
But God made it so
That my plan didn't work
Because they came and forced us,
And we joined the collective.
God, how upset I was.
'Cause I found myself poor again
Without horses and with one cow in the stable.
Poor me, I have no wealth,
No land and no power
To turn the tables again,
To make the world as it used to be.
But I see there is no power
And there is no where to go
'Cause the village is in need
And everywhere in the country is the same:
Everywhere there's poverty,
I don't know what comes next.

I don't know what they're going to achieve
Because they're predators like wolves.
Those who are now the leaders
Didn't even make good shepherds.
You couldn't trust them
To take care of pigs
'Cause they didn't learn how to work;
They learned only to steal.
They didn't learn to read;
They learned only to lie.
They don't know how to produce, how to give;
They only want to take everything away from you.
They're not good people;
They're first-class thieves.
They have no honor;
They don't keep their word
They're (like) chaff in the wind.
They feed on lies;
They drink and carouse,
They drink plum brandy, they drink beer,
They drink the village wealth.
All they do is lie and drink
And take everything from people.
They boast in the assembly
And shout it out loud
That ever since the world began
There have been no such achievements as now
And they don't see, damn them,
How hard life is now.

2. D.A.'s Lament, Ieud
Recorded from Anuța Dunca, 73 years old, female, peasant, in Dragomireşti, Maramureş, 2002.

The year [19]49
Broke our hearts in two.
The whole year long
We didn't see the sun.
When they put us in jail,
In Oradea Mare of all places,
We were not [just] one or two;
There were five of us from our household:
Three women and two men.

They took all five of us, all bound,
Bound hand and foot,
As if we were animals.
They even covered our eyes
Until we were out of the village.
We didn't [work the land];
All we did was sit and eat
The new bread from the state
Measured precisely to the last gram,
Just enough not to starve,
Bits and crumbs
Swallowed with tears.
When we came back home,
We didn't find a thing:
Our communists from the village
Had confiscated everything we had.
In the house and in the stables
Nothing was left.
May God not help them
They did us a lot of harm.
May God settle with them
For all the harm they did to us…

3. Persuasion Work
By Gavrilă Pleş-Chindriş, in his personal memoir, "Colectivizarea la Ieud: Mărturisiri din celea petrecute," Ieud, Maramureş, n.d.

Why are you hesitating, Comrade?
Like it or not there's no way out of it
Don't you know the whole country's
For collectivization?

You'd better do it sooner.
Join the collective with your family.
Turn in the application. It costs
Twenty-five lei.

To gain your happiness
You only need to sign your name.
Do it while it's possible.
Right now. What are you waiting for?

You'll see how good it feels
To work in the collective
When from your own interests
You're forever relieved.

Ask Valenariu
And Ştefan and his Marie
How happy they are
To work in the collective.

I've been deluded,
Believing anyone
Of those whose propaganda
Says wrong is right.

Worries that used to plague me
In the old days, day and night.
Today I'm free of worries
They're someone else's now.

Those who lie in the shade all summer
Like dogs around the (shepherd's house)
Those who don't do any work
But push and shove you around.

And by signing my name
I became from "*gazda*" a servant
With a fixed pay:
Seven *lei* a day's work.

They took away my cart and wagon,
They took my plow, they took my harrow
And everything I had owned,
And they gave me a spade.

A heavy spade and a big spade
For me to dig that much every day
So I have no more than others,
So we're all the same.

And to share our work's worth
With those who waste their summers
So they can live in laziness,
Well, that's the way now in the whole country.

4. Recorded from B.M., aged 72,
peasant woman, Ieud, Maramureş, 1988

I was an only daughter
Like the sun and the moon
I was an only daughter,
Like a moon among saints.

Yes, only me and my brother,
And we had everything aplenty
'Cause we had carts and oxen
And we had many sheep.

And now, poor me,
I only have my stomach and a dog
And my stomach yells it's hungry
'Cause today I haven't given it a thing.

My dog waits for me eagerly
When he sees me coming in,
And I give him a piece of bread
'Cause I didn't have anything else.

'Cause I have no one to take care of me,
No one to earn for me,
But I live with my spinning fork
And enjoy it.

And my relatives and my neighbors
'Cause we all got along well
One asks me over for a meal
Another one sees me home.

I'm not going to work
Since I didn't have any land
Let them work
I gave the land to all three of them.

I gave the land to the president
When he was in the council
They called on me all night.

Only to make me sign
I didn't—I do what I think best
'Cause I have a soul to myself
And I want to make things good for myself.

Their women let them.
They just walked all over the village
To other people's women
Because they liked everyone.
……

Never mind, they're going to pay
For how they harassed people.
They took away our flour;
They confiscated our corn flour.

5. Pro-Collective Songs
Z. Sulițeanu, "Viața Cântecului popular in c. Ieud," *Revista Uniunii Compozitorilor din RPR.* (1952), 44–56.

GAC Scânteia, Ieud, 1950
The Party raised us
And sent us to school,
Young men and women,
So they know how to write letters,
To write without a sigh
To Comrade Stalin.
And so my man wrote to me
While he's in the army
To comfort me with his letter.

The young collectivists cry out:
You, *chiabur*, and you, dog.
I want to see you, my servant
I'll push and shove you but won't give you food.

Whoever doesn't like our will
Can go hang themselves on the side of the hill.
Whoever doesn't like it willingly
Can go sit in jail.

Anyone who works in the collective
Has no problems
Because he has wheat and rye and he has things
to take to the mill.
He doesn't go abroad

On the Collective

I'm not a Party member
But I work in the collective.
I work and enjoy myself
Sas Maria is my name,
And I tell you truthfully
That I spent years in vain
Crying and sighing
Because I had no land.

I had no bread to eat,
No clothes.
My hair turned white
Always working for the rich.
On March the fifth
I signed a contract
And we wrote ourselves down on paper
That we were going to work in the collective.

We all got together
To fulfill the state plan
The Party helped us
With potatoes and with tractors
And all sorts of cereals
When we set to work,
We sing and we enjoy ourselves,
The plowmen with the plows,
The drivers with the tractors,
The women with the spades.
So we break up the land
Beyond the seed beds
For the tractors to pass.
I tell you the truth:
I love it in our village.
I see the land is sown
By the hill and by the river.

I see wheat fields everywhere,
Everywhere spring wheat,
According to the country's plan.

I'm sorry I've grown old
And worked for strangers.
I'm sorry I have no strength
And I can't go to work.
Since I'm weak and have grown old,
I'm not good for work anymore.
They are spiteful and angry
That we made the collective,
And they judged us in the village
That we will die and go to hell.
Let them judge us, never mind,
'Cause we will die and go to heaven.

NOTES

1 See *Hotărârea Consiliului de Ministri,* no. 299, 20 March 1950, and *Buletinul Oficial al RPR,* no. 30, 28 March 1950. The formulaic closing of the inaugural announcement discursively constructs the members' loyalties: "Long live the Soviet Union, supporter of the working class of the entire world! Long live the Romanian Workers' Party, the guide and support of the working peasants." All statistics cited in this paper are approximate, varying from one official document to another. Historic Maramureş, referred to as Maramureş in this paper, consists of the several villages west of and including Sighetul Marmației, and those of valleys Cosau, Mara, Iza and Vişeu.

2 See Direcția Județeană Baia Mare a Arhivelor Nationale (DJANM), Fond "274," file 17/1951, 138 (Secția Secretariat), "Tablou de comunele din raza Raionului Vişeu pe categorii de fertilitate," (15 of 17 locales are category V; 2, category IV). The area under discussion consists of two regions: one hilly (21 villages), one mountainous (38 villages). See DJANM, Fond "58," file 65/1946, 56. On agriculture in Maramureş, see I. Chioreanu, "Dezvoltarea Agriculturii Maramureşene," in *Lupta maselor populare maramureşene împotriva exploatării, pentru edificarea, sub conducerea, P.C.R., a societății socialiste* (Baia Mare: Muzeul Județean Maramureş, 1972).

3 In the summers of 2000, 2002, and 2003, I conducted 31 in-depth interviews in Ieud, Sighetu Marmației, Baia Mare, and Vişeu de Sus. These were supplemented by interview data previously collected in Ieud, peasant memoirs, and poems. (One memoir is Gavrilă Pleş-Chindriş' hand-written notebook, "Colectivizarea la Ieud: Marturisiri din cele petrecute.") In addition, I consulted archival documents at the *Consiului National pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității* (ACNSAS), the *Direcția Județeană Maramureş a Arhivelor Naționale,* the *Direcția Județeană Bistrița a Arhivelor Naționale*, the *Direcția Județeană Cluj a Arhivelor Naționale*, the *Arhiva Primăriei* Ieud, and Vişeu de Sus. Between 1949 and 1952, Ieud was part of the administrative region, Rodna, that no longer exists. Records from this crucial period are thus difficult to locate. I am especially grateful to Virgiliu Țârău and Mihai Dăncuş, as well as Marius Oprea and Viorel

Rusu for their assistance. Also, most texts are reproduced from the originals, maintaining grammatical errors.

4 Prefect Ion Odoviciuc, newly installed in Sighet, failed in his effort to integrate Maramureş into the Soviet Union's Subcarpathian Ukraine. Interviews and two memoirs by Ieudeni, as well as a Proces Verbal of then primar Pop Dumitru Roibu (ACNSAS, FP84), about the resistance to Odoviciuc's leadership in Sighet, are largely consistent with the "official" history of this period. See, for example, Vasile Luca's report on this episode in Florin Constantiniu, *PCR, Pătrăşcanu şi Transilvania, 1945–1946* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001), 108–109; and Ilie Gherheş, *Maramureşul între dictatul de la Viena şi Conferința de Pace de la Paris, 30 august 1940–10 februarie 1947* (Doctoral thesis, Iaşi, 2001), ch. II.3. Dunca Ioan Joldea, a priest from Ieud, passionately and persuasively reminded Moroşeni that the Armistice signed by Stalin guaranteed Romania's borders. Not surprisingly, this branded him as a Romanian nationalist.

5 See ACNSAS, Fond "Penal," (FP) 84, vol. 12, 273. Father Joldea was one of several highly influential priests from Ieud. To the regime, he was a "mortal enemy of socialism" and "very dangerous to society" for which he was sentenced to 16 years in prison. See ACNSAS, FP, vol. 9, 293.

6 It is well beyond the scope of this paper to analyze the complexly intertwined sagas of these various "enemies of the people" who populated the mountains of Maramureş and later, Romania's harshest prisons, labor camps, and the Canal. I have reviewed hundreds of pages of unedited penal files. On the Popşa gang, the Pop Achim gang, religious resistance, see, for example, ACNSAS, FP 84, vols. 1–6, 9, 11, 12, 22 among the 124 volumes that comprise this large file. The "Organizational chart of the terrorist gang Popşa," FP 84, vol. 11, 86, is especially illuminating. Those associated with terrorist gangs were generally charged with engaging in "plots against the social order." Ieud's association with the Popşa gang today is memorialized with a cross at the house of Dunca Dumitru Pâțu. There, one of the Popşa brothers, Vasile, was shot and killed in an action that led to the arrest of all but the youngest member of the Dunca family (5 people, including two sisters and the older of two brothers) and others. Popşa Ion escaped but was later captured and sentenced to long years in prison. On Dunca Ion Joldea, see FP 84, vol. 9, 25, among others. The *Comitetul Central al Partidului Muncitoresc Român* was informed, for instance, that he and other priests from Ieud were accused of "being engaged in politics masked as religion. Accomplices less directly involved included those who provided food, haircuts, and other services to those in hiding. The estimates of those imprisoned are drawn from the personal memoir of one of Ieud's peasant chroniclers, B.S.

7 An informal list of Ieud's notables identified some 69 individuals. Included are two brothers, D.G. and D.S., who were prominent Communist Party members (i.e., a military general and director of an ethnographic museum) who intervened on numerous occasions to convince their relatives and others to see the future and forego their resistance. I thank Mihai and Ioana Dăncuş and Grigore Balea for their assistance in reconstructing this list of personalities. See also DJANM, Fond "58," file 65/1946, 55. "Wealthy peasants" is not the most felicitous translation of the term "*gazde*" as it was used in Maramureş. There, *gazde* were peasants that were wealthier in relative terms (but not large landowners or landlords) and of higher social status, often serving as godparents, etc.

8 See Law no. 187, published in *Monitorul Oficial* (Official Gazette), no. 68, 23 March 1945 (DJANM, fond 58, no. 7/1945, of the Camera Agricolă a j. Maramureş). It is beyond the possibilities of this paper to discuss this and other such measures in detail.
9 DJANM, Fond "58," file 71/1946, 2, 3: "Comitetul local de reformă agrară al comunei Ieud."
10 See DJANM, Fond "58," file 144/1946, 71, of the Camera Agricolă Maramureş.
11 See DJANM, Fond "53," file 123/1946–1947, 5, of the S.S.A.
12 See DJANM, Fond "53," file 123/1946–1947, 1, of the S.S.A. Most reported well over half of their populations were starving. The measures are unknown.
13 See DJANM, Fond "53," file 150/1947, 10, of the S.S.A.
14 See, for example, DJANM, Fond "53," files 221/1948, 25, 41; 234/1948, 23; 179/1947, 6, 7, and others.
15 See Octavian Roske, "Colectivizarea şi mecanismul colectării. Repere social-politice," in Dorin Dobrincu and Constantin Iordachi, eds., *Ţărănimea şi puterea. Procesul de colectivizare a agriculturii în România, 1949–1962* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2005), 113–135.
16 See DJANM, Fond "10," file 8/1951 (Comitetul de Partid Raional Vişeu, Secţia economică-agrară). D.I., 78 years old, former *chiabur*, Ieud. Interestingly, regional officials did complain to central authorities that the obligatory requisitions were applied mechanically in Maramureş, not taking into consideration the poor quality of the land, category V, recognized by the Central Committee, 3 and 5 March 1948: "Middle peasants and chiaburi cannot meet these requisitions." See DJANM, Fond "10," file 8/1951 "Comitetul de Partid Raional Vişeu, Secţia economică-agrară."
17 Vezi Circular Letter no. 72, June 7, 1949.
18 See Gheorghe Chindriş, "Chiaburii din plasa Iza sunt demascaţi şi daţi în judecată," *Graiul Maramureşului,* 16 April 1950, 3. I am grateful to Liana Grancea for finding the 1949 editions of this paper.
19 See N. Timiş, "Demascarea unui mârşav chiabur din Ieud," *Graiul Maramureşului,* 31 July 1949, 3.
20 See "Demascarea unor noi ticaloşii chiabureşti," *Graiul Maramureşului,* 14 August 1949, 3.
21 See Goth Mihai, "Ţăranii muncitori din comuna Ieud demască uneltirile chiabureşti," *Graiul Maramureşului,* 26 February 1950, 5.
22 I thank C. for sharing this deeply disturbing personal story with me. Her mother's response to the authorities was in keeping with local social structure. While beating a woman was accepted behavior, beating a pregnant one was not. Women were not expected to deliver quotas: "The woman is a housewife, not the head of the family. The man, therefore, was recorded in the agricultural register, not the woman." (P.V., 82).
23 Interview D.V., summer 2000, commnune Giulvaz, Timiş county.
24 A former chiabur, then 72 years old, recalled this verse.
25 See, for example, David Kideckel, *The Solitude of Collectivism: Romanian Villagers to the Revolution and Beyond* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1993); Katherine Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania* (Ithaca, London: Cornell Univeristy Press, 2003), and other papers in this volume.
26 Interview P.G., summer 2002, Baia Mare.
27 Memoir, B.S., handwritten notebook, n.d., Ieud.
28 Space limitations do not permit fuller discussion of these. On confiscated property in Ieud, see Arhiva Primaria Ieud, Registrul Agricol Comunal Partea IIB pe anii 1951–55,

anexa 6; DJANM Fond "58," files 49 and 144/1945–1948 on difficulties in enforcing the decision to expropriate, also file 190, "Camera Agricolă a județului Maramureş." On comasarea, see Ministerul Agriculturii, "Decret no. 151 pentru comasarea şi circulația bunurilor agricole" published in *Buletinul Oficial*, no. 52, June 10, 1950.

29 See Arhiva Primariei Ieud, "Raport despre mersul schimbului de teren în comuna Ieud, în vederea formării Gospodăriei Agricole Colective, 25 februarie 1950." See also, for example, "Strict Secret," Comitetul Județean, circular letter no. 72, June 7, 1949.

30 See interview B.S., summer 2000 and Arhiva Primaria Ieud, "Raport despre mersul schimbului de teren" cited in footnote 29.

31 He also noted: "Collectivization wasn't, in fact, really loved then. Somehow people heard about the Soviet *colhoz*. But little by little they became convinced."

32 Land ownership was not in and of itself determinative. See, for example, Arhiva Primariei Vişeu, "Tabel Nominal: Chiaburi, Raional Vişeu, Regiunii Baia Mare, 1956–1958." Those who applied to be removed from the category of chiabur did not succeed if they allegedly continued to exploit labor. See, for an example, "Situația modului de rezolvare a cererilor de radiere de pe lista de chiaburi, 12 iunie 1953," in DJANM Fond "274," file "Comisia Raională, Sfatul Popular al Raionului Vişeu, " 48–51.

33 See interviews P.V., summer 2002, and I.S., summer 2002, Ieud. In rural areas, servants worked in the fields.

34 Religion was also a significant factor, with resistance to church unification and to communism often overlapping. Class differentiation not only applied to quotas and taxes, but affected purchasing costs. For example, wood was cheapest for poor peasants (20 lei for a load). For middle peasants it was 30 lei a load, and for chiaburi, 50 lei a load, as one eighty-four year old peasant recollected.

35 This former president of the GAC and secretary of the party in Ieud also noted that in 1949, villagers beat the few of them who were communists. (He showed a head scar to make his point.)

36 Similarly, personal vendettas accounted for local abuses with regard to collections. See DJANM, Fond "10," file 33/1952, 61.

37 Interview H.D., July 2002, Sighetul Marmației.

38 See ACNSAS, FP 248/II, 17.

39 See ACNSAS. FP 248/II, 22.

40 There is slippage between "chiabur" and "enemy." While the former were by definition enemies, poor peasants could not be considered chiaburi. They could, however, be "enemies." In one of the many penal cases against Ieudeni, a state prosecutor declared: "It is all the more surprising that members of this organization come from healthy social origins, most of them are illiterate, victims of the most reactionary and retrograde elements of the bourgeoisie and of the land owners who are not in agreement with the revolutionary conquests of the proletariat of our country." See ACNSAS, FP 160, vol. 2, 611.

41 Public and private acts of complicity and duplicity were structured from the beginning, numerous examples of which are presented in this paper. See also Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

42 See ACNSAS, Fond "Documentar" (FD), file 42/1952, 50.

43 Their original petition was signed on January 13, 1950. See Arhiva Primariei Ieud, document not catalogued.

44 These figures refer to adults. On *chiaburi*, see also DJANM, Fond "274," file 25/1951, 48–51, that concludes "we certify the exactness of this report," 2 June 1951. Yet, most reports claim 44 chiaburi originally. By 1953, the number of *chiaburi* was increased to 109.

45 See, for example, Arhiva Primaria Ieud, file 77/1950. The number who joined soon dropped to 80.

46 See DJAN Bistrița-Năsăud (DJBN), Fond "62," file 1, 71, "Comitetul regiunii Rodna al Frontului Plugarilor, Secția Organizatorică." See also DJBN, Fond "62," file 6/1951 for instructions regarding educational circles.

47 In the early years of communism, chiaburi were allegedly allied with the Americans.

48 This is the first of a multi-verse song. See DJANM, Fond "10," file 8/1951, 57; also Z. Sulițeanu, "Viața Cântecului Popular în c. Ieud," *Revista uniunii compozitorilor din RPR,* (1952), 44–56.

49 *Dare de Seamă* regularly reported on such matters. See DJANM, Fond "10," file 15/1951, 27, 29, of the Organizing Committee Ieud, among others. See also DJANM, Fond "10," file 6, 81–132 on propaganda, and interview with B.S, summer 2000, Ieud.

50 See DJANM, Fond "274," file 14/1950, 40 (Sfatul Popular Raional Vişeu). However, it was reported that the person responsible for the wall newspapers in Ieud was not as responsible about his duties. See DJANM, Fond "10," file 15/1951, 35.

51 See DJANM, File 44/195, "Regionala PMR, Secția Propagandă şi Agitație," 16. Only six finished the full course of study. It is beyond the scope of this paper to cite the documentation available for this discussion of educational activities.

52 See DJANM, Fond "10," file 6. No figures were offered for the town.

53 See DJANM, Fond "10," file 15, 27.

54 See DJANM, Fond "10," file 33, 31.

55 They were not to read the paper during working hours, but between 6 AM and 7 AM. See Fond "10," file 15, 8 (Organizația de Bază, July 26, 1951).

56 From the memoir of B.S., Ieud. Other than former local officials, most shared this view.

57 Interview, P.V., July 2002, Ieud.

58 Personal memoir, B.S. His recollections in this unpublished manuscript corroborate the position of D.G. in the letter cited in the epigram and in note 88 below.

59 Interview D.V., September 2000, c. Giulvaz, Timis.

60 She was able to copy texts. Interview P.N., summer 2002, Ieud.

61 See Arhiva Primaria Ieud, file 76, "Cereri de Înscriere în GAC din anii 1950–1961." As noted later, the petitions in 1962 differ noticeably.

62 See DJBN, Fond "38," file 4, "Situația datelor în legătură cu gospodăriile agricole colective din Regiunea Maramureş," 183–187.

63 See DJANM, Fond "10," files 8/1951, "Comitetul Raional al PMR Vişeu, Sectia economic-agrară," 77, 78; 42/1952, 21; and files 6, 33, 42.

64 See DJANM, Fond "10," 33/1952. Or, regarding milk requisitions, peasants had to travel long distances, often by foot. See DJANM, Fond "10," file 8/1951, 66.

65 See DJBN, Fond "38," file 1/1905, 1; DJBN, Fond "38," file 2/1950, "Sfatul Popular al Regiunii Rodna, Dare de Seamă," 12.

66 See, for example, DJANM, Fond "10," files 33/1952, 61; 15, 7, 42, 11, 386, which are representative examples.

67 See Arhiva Primăria Ieud, document not catalogued, February 25, 1950.

68 See DJANM, Fond "274," file 17/1952, 79 (page unclear) and file 8/1957–58, 106; DJANM, Fond "10," file 33/1952, 10, footnote 12.

69 See ACNSAS, FP 248, vol. 22, 9, 10.
70 See Arhiva Primariei Ieud, "Raport despre mersul schimbului de teren în c. Ieud, în vederea formării GAC-ului PMR, j. Maramureş," February, 25, 1950.
71 See ACNSAS, FD 7, file 10, 293. On Siberia, see footnote 4; ACNSAS, FP 248/1, 17.
72 See DJANM, Fond "10," file 8/1951, 54.
73 See, for example, DJBN, Fond "38," file 1 and 2 (regular reports, Sfatul Popular al Regiunii Rodna).
74 See ACNSAS, FP 248, vol. II, 9.
75 See ACNSAS, FD 7, file 5, 153.
76 On Joldea, see ACNSAS, FP, file 84. On religious sects' activities, see ACNSAS, FD 7, file 5, 153. On mysticism, see DJBN, Fond "62," file 7, 95.
77 See DJANM, Fond "274," file 14/1954, 1–4, 121–125, etc. The arbitrariness of this category is exemplified in archival documents. In 1952, one document lists 109 by name, situation. In 1954, the pages cited herein, one official reviews the claim by Ieud's local party that there were only 30 *chiaburi* rather than 78. The regional authorities, checking each case, agreed to remove 24 from the list of 78 (that had, seemingly, been reduced from 109). Yet, in another 1954 report from the Secretariat of the same Sfatul Popular Raional, the total number of chiaburi is listed as 66. See DJANM, Fond "274," file 14, 226.
78 See ACNSAS, Fond "Informativ" (FI) 3185, file 1, 10. One former "political" was accused of threatening a collector with a scythe. Preventive re-arrests were mentioned in interviews as well. See also Aurel Vişovan, *Dumnezeul meu, Dumnezeul meu, pentru ce m-ai părăsit?*, 2 vols. (Cluj-Napoca: Napoca Star, 1999).
79 Interview I.S., summer 2002, Ieud. *Chiaburi* who did join consistently suspected them of having been informers, for which there is no evidence.
80 See, for example, B.V., former middle peasant, interview summer 2002, Ieud.
81 Interview I.S., summer 2000, Ieud. Bob Levy called the gendered aspect of resistance to my attention many years ago. Regarding the resistance of Uniate priests, nuns served as critical messengers between those in hiding. In the penal files, they are "religious fanatics." See, for example, ACNSAS, FP 84, v. 4, 25.
82 Interview P.V., summer 2002, Ieud.
83 See DJANM, Fond "335," file 18/1962, UJCAP (Uniunea Judeţeană a Cooperativelor Agricole de Producţie), "Actul de constituire şi cereri de înscriere în CAP Ieud." Many people volunteered that when certain individuals, former *chiaburi* of high ethical standing, finally signed, they followed suit.
84 Memoir B.S. This memoir was hand-written over the years. When the CAP was formed, one of the first presidents of the GAC left Ieud. He said he could not support his family of 8 on his earnings from the GAC!
85 It is beyond the scope of this paper to develop this theme. See also Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity*.
86 In a remarkable letter written by him and another brother, D.S. an army general, to a third brother in Ieud, D.V., a *chiabur*, they emphasized that they were not clairvoyants, but rather, knew what would happen "because we are in contact with the realities of daily life, always studying and aware of the laws according to which society and the style of life are developing and must develop." The letter is a fine example of communist "political correctness." See ACNSAS, FP 248, vol. 2/1950, 23–25.
87 One person showed me years of contracts, all for naught. In his old age, he does not have "even a small pension…" Interview, B.G., summer 2002, Ieud.

88 Interview C.G., summer 2002, Ieud.

89 Space does not allow full discussion of this fascinating interview with D.V. in September 2000, Giulvaz, Timiş county. By contrast, he praised the collectives in Banat.

90 On Ieudeni during the Ceauşescu era, see Gail Kligman, *The Wedding of the Dead: Ritual, Poetics and Popular Culture in Transylvania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Paradoxically, today, those who prospered locally during the regime are seemingly less well-off in material terms. Less accustomed to migrant labor for longer periods of time, they have not taken advantage of opportunities abroad as readily as have those who worked elsewhere in Romania during the regime. The visible effects of such differences are manifest in the construction of new villa-like homes in the areas where migrant laborers return to invest their hard-earned cash, to then leave again in what is circulatory migration.

91 The ACNSAS archives have been especially important in understanding the inter-relationships between resistance and collectivization. Although no systematic list of the order of collectivization has come to light, my initial supposition regarding collectivization and Uniate resistance, despite variation, seems to be on track: see, for example, the communities of Călineşti, Rozavlea, Dragomireşti, Hoteni, Berbeşti. I am grateful to Grigore Balea who helped me reconstruct where Uniate priests resisted or switched to the Orthodox Church.

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Collectivization Policies in the Cluj Region: The Aiud and Turda Districts

VIRGILIU ȚÂRĂU

> Do *chiaburi* have the right to drink in restaurants or pubs? Are they allowed to go to balls and theater performances alongside middle and poor peasants? Or, for instance, a *chiabur*'s daughter who married a poor peasant, can she go to celebrations in the village? If one of them doesn't want to execute directives from the village People's Council, what measures can the Council take against them? Can they sue them? Or just shake them up a bit?
>
> DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Rimetea," file 10/1953, 182.

To paraphrase Voltaire, we should judge people's intelligence by the questions they ask. The quotation above, excerpted from an official query sent by the President of the People's Council of the village of Rimetea to the authorities of the Turda district, is illustrative of how communist authorities thought they should interact with their fellow citizens who, for ideological reasons, had become undesirable in the new socio-political order. Moreover, beyond their content and language, the questions posed suggest the amplitude of class warfare waged in Romania's villages, as well as the degree to which local authorities were accountable to those higher up the power structure. Issued in the midst of the campaign to persuade villagers to join the collective farm, the excerpt also illustrates the repressive dimension of the collectivization process.

The socioeconomic changes that affected the world of Romania's villages between 1949 and 1962 are difficult to analyze in the absence of interdisciplinary studies focused on different areas of the country, which examine the specific stages through which the communist project to radically transform Romanian agricultural practices were implemented locally (at regional, district and village levels). Moreover, this study focuses on two districts—Rimetea and Măgina—from the administrative region of Cluj. It traces the structural development of the collectivization process, examining the strategies designed and deployed by administrative and political authorities at regional, district and village levels. The first part of the study evaluates the collectivization process through an assessment of the projects and actions initiated by the regional and district authorities. The second part discusses the stages of collectivization in Rimetea and Măgina. Despite their geographical proximity, at the time, these two villages belonged to

different administrative units and differed structurally in terms of ethnic, social and religious composition, as well as property forms, thus making them well suited for comparison: 1) With respect to ethnic composition, Rimetea was inhabited almost exclusively by Hungarians, whereas Măgina was inhabited mostly by Romanians; 2) As to social composition and forms of property, in Rimetea, mid-sized property owners predominated with a significant number of villagers working not in agriculture but as craftsmen and brick masons; in Măgina, small property owners formed the majority who practiced subsistence agriculture; and 3) In Rimetea most villagers were Unitarians, while in Măgina there was an Eastern Orthodox majority and a Greek Catholic minority.

Studying these two villages allows us to reconstitute the particularities and tendencies that shaped the construction of new rural identities in their local context. Analyzing the process of collectivization at the regional, district and local levels also makes it possible to tease out the impact of the central and local authorities' respective actions, or, in other words, it enables us to assess who was responsible when and to what extent for collectivization's successes and failures.

Situated in the center of Transylvania, the administrative region of Cluj[1] was, in 1950, initially divided into eight districts (Aiud, Câmpeni, Cluj, Dej, Gherla, Huedin, Jibou and Turda).[2] In 1952 the administrative boundaries of the regions of Cluj, Rodna and Mureş were redrawn (see Maps 1 and 2, pages 496–7), and Cluj gained six additional districts (Bistrița, Beclean, Luduş, Năsăud, Sărmaş and Zalău). In 1949, as this administrative and political restructuring was taking place, collectivization was also launched in the region. Despite the methods of intimidation employed, the initial results were modest. Only two collective farms were inaugurated that first year, both on September 11th: the GAC "Bobâlna" in the village of Mintiul Gherlei (in the district of Gherla), and the GAC "Horia" in Şuțu (in the district of Turda). The forced organization of collective farms continued through 1950, with 63 GACs founded between February and September.[3]

The process slowed down considerably over the next two years, with only seven collective farms created in the entire Cluj region. However, by October 1952, with the integration of the six new districts mentioned above, the total number of collective farms rose to 125.[4] The quick pace at which the first collectives were set up did not, however, bode well for their success. Although the state made available the land acquired through the expropriations of 1949, the large number of poor and landless peasants hindered the consolidation of these collectives. Moreover, in the beginning, the Securitate was directly involved, contributing to the campaign's aggressive tactics and violence. Within a year, many peasants who had joined out of fear, or who had been blackmailed into joining, stopped participating in collective activities.[5] Later they stopped working altogether in the hope that their petitions to withdraw from the collective would be approved. Consequently, after 1952, forced collectivization in the Cluj region was abandoned as it was in the rest of the country.

Nonetheless, the organization of new collectivist structures continued, especially in places where the persuasion campaigns were in high gear.[6] After 1952

those in decision-making positions concentrated their efforts on forming voluntary TOZ associations, although those got off to a lukewarm start. By 1954 only 2.54 percent of the region's land that could be collectivized was organized in this way. Yet by 1957, the TOZ associations comprised more families and land than did the original collective farms, a situation that prevailed until the middle of 1960.[7] During 1959, even though the number of socialist-type agricultural units grew very little, the number of families in them and land holdings doubled and even trebled, foregrounding the transition to the collectivization campaign's final assault.

In what follows I illustrate the stages and pace of the collectivization process at the level of the districts to which the two communities under consideration belonged. The analysis is based on documents produced by different Party structures (from local Party chapters, district bureaus and committees, to the leader of the Agrarian Section of the regional Party organization), by administrative structures (regional, district and local People's Councils), and by the collective farms under discussion, as well as on interviews conducted in 2001–2002.

1. THE DISTRICT OF AIUD

Despite the efforts of Aiud's political leaders, not one collective farm was created in 1949, even though the district's farmland was of a high-fertility grade. The authorities then resorted to extremely brutal methods, which eventually produced results. In the summer of 1950, following the decentralization of the decision regarding the creation of collective farms, the district's first seven GACs were created: "Lenin's Flag" in Odverem, "Red Flag" in Şoimuş, "Brotherly Union" in Mirăslău, "Freedom" in Cistei, "Red Banner" in Asânip, "Red Star" in Sâncrai and "Red October" in Războieni.[8] In founding them, the authorities took into account the favorable economic environment and the availability of large areas of the highest quality farmland that existed in most of these villages situated in the Mureş Valley, which were themselves also not heavily populated. The expropriation of land in 1949 had made more land available, in addition to which the authorities exerted pressure on those who were employed in the state sector and still owned land in villages to hand it over to the state, which would then reallocate it to the new socialist farms. However, the authorities' inability to solve the villagers' problems slowed the rhythm of collectivization considerably.

Following the political and administrative restructuring and the "verification," or screening, of Party members and activists, the regional instructors and members of the Redistricting Committee identified numerous cases of abuse committed by the former leadership in their "work to establish collective structures." The instructor for the Agitation Department of the Romanian Workers' Party's (RWP) Cluj Regional Branch recorded in the Proceedings that "some activists from the [previous] bureau who had used coercive methods to persuade the poor and middle peasants to join the collective […] were thrown out of the meeting hall by the new leadership, being told that they had created the collective with the help

of the *Securitate* and *Miliția* [the police]."[9] The replacement of the old guard in the fall of 1950 happened without any discussion of the errors committed, giving rise to a pervasive atmosphere of uncertainty at the district level. On the one hand, the former leaders contested their ouster, arguing that they "were thrown out of the meeting like bandits, without any recognition of the work" they had done. Their downfall was commented on widely, in consequence of which tensions erupted in the villages where new collectives had been formed. For instance, in Odverem and Şoimuş the villagers refused to work at the collective although they had previously "agreed" to do so. On the other hand, the new leaders, who had few skills, little experience, and no links to the rest of the district, proved incapable of stemming the tide of dissatisfaction in the collectivized villages, even though they applied force to peasants in some villages to form collectives.[10]

The leadership's inability to implement the decisions issued at the regional level, combined with the real danger that the district's collectives would dissolve,[11] led to the removal, barely a month into their appointment, of several members of the Aiud Committee of the Romanian Workers Party, namely: the First Secretary, T. Fogarasi; the leader of the Party Organization, Trade Unions, and the Young Workers' Union, Ioan Albu; and the head of the Agrarian Section, Popa Ioan Pleşa.[12] Instability at the level of the Party leadership continued throughout 1951 and 1952. The appointment of activists from the regional Party organization was not tolerated locally, giving rise to frequent changes in the local Party leadership. In August 1951, Jozsef Cozma replaced Ioan Orban; by November–December 1951, Márton Kulcsár had become the new leader whom Ioan Gergely, in turn, replaced in the summer of 1952. A former regional Party instructor, Gergely managed to remain in office until the beginning of 1955. Despite all of these internal changes in the collectives—the majority of their leadership personnel having been replaced and their local Party chapters restructured—the overall situation worsened.[13]

There are countless examples of what went wrong in the way these collectives functioned. To illustrate, in Odverem and Şoimuş the situation had deteriorated considerably: because of the excesses committed by the authorities, the members refused to work and demanded that the collective be dismantled on the grounds that it had not been established with their free consent. Moreover, they wrote letters of protest and went to Bucharest in the spring of 1951, where they met with Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Ana Pauker to resolve the crisis.[14] On March 15, in the presence of a delegate from the Central Committee of the RWP, the district authorities came up with a set of measures to address the GAC's problems.[15] However, in May 1951, 44 of 80 families in Odverem, and 49 of 63 families in Şoimuş, left the collectives.[16] Over the course of the following years, although activists from the Agrarian Section of the District Committee and technicians and engineers from the district's People's Council reported organizational improvements, increases in production, and even increases in the number of people joining the collectives (four in Şoimuş and six in Odverem), the two collectives continued to struggle.[17]

The situation was not better at the GAC "Lenin's Way" in Odverem (which numbered 38 families and 137 ha at the time of its creation), where, after 1953, 15 families withdrew and the others either worked sporadically or stopped working altogether.[18] The District People's Council report of April 13, 1955 to the Cluj Regional People's Council emphasized that "in early 1955 eight more families withdrew so that the GAC's leadership council's only hope was that the remaining 15 families" would continue to work even though only nine household heads were still participating regularly in the collective's activities. Over 20 ha had remained unsown in 1954 and over 45 ha of farmland and vineyards had not been worked. The president of the Odverem collective farm complained to the district authorities that, in spite of his efforts, "the situation has not changed and membership in the collective, instead of growing, keeps falling and things keep getting worse." Awareness of these problems made it all the more difficult for the district authorities to step up their efforts to create new collectives.

In Mirăslău, because of the excesses perpetrated by the Securitate and the police, a significant number of peasants petitioned to withdraw from the collective.[19] The Party intervened to better the situation: they transferred the offending officers and activists,[20] and replaced the collective's leadership. However, there was little improvement until the mid-1950s when, as a demonstration of good will, the authorities forgave the collective's debts and extended credit for the acquisition of modern machinery.

In fact, all collectives confronted difficulties of one kind or another. As already seen, the peasants refused to work and withdrew from the collectives. They also protested the abuses committed by both the leadership and activists, claiming that "they were rude and abusive to the collectivists," they "were carrying on drunk," and they "did not support the collective's activities at the political level."[21] The peasants also accused them of aggravating tensions by talking dispargingly about what was going on in the collective, and deploring the pitiful state to which they had been reduced, [asserting that] "since they joined the collective they had become poorer, and the citizens in the private sector had more goods and lived better."[22]

In tandem with the "work of consolidating the old collectivist structures" along the lines specified by the regional authorities,[23] at the beginning of 1951 the district's administrative and Party structures launched a broad campaign to create new collectives. Relying on the work done by the former local Committee of the RWP during the summer of 1950, the district First Secretary, T. Fogarasi, informed the regional RWP Cluj on January 17, 1951, that earlier efforts to create new collectives had not been sufficiently thorough, and that favorable conditions for their formation actually did exist in many villages. While such reports continued to be sent to the region, when the First Secretary was removed in August 1951, these "prospective" collectives remained just that. When joining a collective was changed from a system based on checking off a name on a form to one based on written petitions, a number of peasants withdrew. Despite the pressure exerted

from Cluj, where the Secretaries of the Party committees had met at the beginning of August, the new head of the Agrarian Section in Aiud declared at the month's end that "the problem [was] dead in [their] District."[24]

Consequently, amid fervent political activity, by September the villages of Măgina and Rădeşti had disappeared from the list of prospective GACs, replaced instead by the village of Noşlac.[25] However, by October few had signed up.[26] To salvage appearances, on October 11th, a report to the regional authorities falsely recorded the founding of three associations in Unirea, Măgina and Lopadea Nouă.[27] At the beginning of 1952, following a site visit, the new First Secretary, Kulcsar, reported that by November 15, 1951, 19 peasants had already petitioned to join in Lunca Mureş and some 15 each in Noşlac and Ciuguzel.[28]

The process of setting up new collectives proceeded with difficulty during the first few months of 1952. Then, hoping to get better results, the Party leaders changed tactics again, reverting to the coercive methods employed in 1949 and 1950 while simultaneously widening the scope of their activities. The authorities now targeted compact areas, one of which was situated in the district's northern part, adjacent to the district of Turda. It was on the national road linking the two administrative centers, and its political center was located in Unirea. The targeted villages—Decea, Inoc, Ciuguzel, Unirea, Noşlac and Lunca Mureş—came under unabated pressure in the summer of 1952 (as indicated in two documents dated November 1952)[29] and were all collectivized by the end of that year. The proceedings sent to the regional authorities did not mention the constant harassment of the villagers, instead reporting the increase in the number of villages where peasants joined the collectives or voluntary TOZ associations, and prospects for developing the socialist sector in agriculture.

This new push became the focus of debate at the district level generated by the March 30, 1952 "closed letter of the RWP Central Committee."[30] Discussion about "right-wing deviations" led to discussion about local failures in the collectivization process. Despite the authorities' determination, evidenced by the work of permanent teams (of activists) and the existence of a dedicated propaganda organizer in each of the 20 targeted villages,[31] by November 1952 only one collective in the village of Unirea[32] and six TOZ associations had been successfully created.

In December the authorities again changed their tactics. When attempts to create collectives were unsuccessful, those who had signed up were advised to form voluntary agricultural associations (as happened in Decea,[33] Ciuguzel, Meşcreac,[34] Noşlac[35] and Lunca Mureş, where such associations were inaugurated in the summer of 1952). Also in December, following the reorganization of activities at the district level, a decision was issued to transform some of these associations into GACs in the beginning of 1953 (e.g., Decea and Lunca Mureş).[36] Moreover, in several villages, even though there were too few petitions or too little land to create a collective farm, TOZ associations were established quickly where political will existed, that is, where enough Party members had

been persuaded. Hence, at the beginning of 1953, the district had 10 collectives and 8 associations.

Throughout 1953 and 1954, district activists were mostly preoccupied with strengthening the newly created GACs, particularly since so many of those already in existence faced the same ongoing problems: in Sâncrai and Odverem, for instance, in 1954, only three or four families worked for the collective farm.[37] In the interest of further consolidation, all cooperative enterprises had to deal with the persistent problem of excluding *chiaburi* from their membership. The campaign against them, initiated in 1951, reached its height at the end of 1952. By September, 113 had been thrown out, including 10 who had held important positions in the collective. The majority of those excluded did not necessarily come from "unhealthy" backgrounds; instead, many among them had been identified as openly opposed to the regime. (Regarding exclusion based on social origin, the size of property holdings was not a reliable indicator by which to label someone a *chiabur*, in that this could vary between 0 and 10 ha.) The reports on the organizational situation of the collectives, under the rubric "Manifestations of the class enemy," included numerous cases of *chiaburi* who instigated people to leave the collective or to express their opposition toward creating one.[38] Needless to say, class enemies were blamed for failures, even though failures were seldom mentioned in the official reports (and then, only when there were changes in the district's leadership).[39]

The district's leadership was stable from the end of 1952 until 1955; however, stability did not lead to new successes in collectivizing agriculture. The five collectives created between 1952 and 1955—"Kossuth Lajos" in Unirea, "May 1" in Noşlac, "August 23" in Rădeşti, "Fight for Peace" in Lunca Mureş and "People's Will" in Decea—did not fare better than the first generation of collectives, although the land at their disposal was of better quality than that of their predecessors. No other collective had been formed in the district of Aiud by the end of 1955. While planning for more GACs continued, the results were poor, with only the collective in Radeşti established.[40] The documents issued by the local authorities, regardless of their form (e.g., as Progress Reports or Proceedings), show a constant preoccupation with creating collectives, especially between 1953 and 1954. However, given the inefficiency of the first collectives, the authorities faced fierce opposition from the peasants, who had already resisted two aggressive persuasion campaigns. Even those in charge of persuading the peasants were themselves "unconvinced." In July 1953, when the new statute of the collective in Radeşti was debated, most of the local authorities rejected the creation of a GAC there. In Gârbova de Jos, the Secretary of the local Party chapter—whose wife had forbidden him to stay on—resigned so as not to hinder the process of collectivization.[41] In September 1953, the list of 14 villages with the potential to be collectivized was reduced to nine, one of which did not even have an association.

As a result of the decisions taken in August at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the RWP in Bucharest, the effort to collectivize acquired a

bureaucratic character. Apart from the persuasion committees active in targeted villages, technicians and engineers from the district's agricultural section were charged with drafting the cadastral plans to be used to consolidate properties, thereby preparing the administrative transition to this new form of agricultural organization. To preclude future failures, a strategy was designed to send future GAC presidents, brigadiers and accountants from every locale to nine-month training programs.[42] However, none of these changes produced more tangible results.

In view of the GACs' enduring problems, the authorities turned their attention primarily to creating and consolidating associations. Villages in the Mureş Valley were targeted until 1955, but in 1956 and 1957, villages in hilly and mountainous areas were also included. This development reflected not only economic interests but also political approaches meant to foster, over the long run, familiarity with working collectively and the skills necessary to do so. These also set the stage for the final collectivization drive.

To achieve full collectivization in the final phase between 1959 and 1962, the authorities resorted to a "technical" solution, first consolidating the associations and then, with their members' "free consent," turning them into collectives. Party activists and members of the repressive forces conducted the persuasion campaign, joined by middle and high school personnel who were also drawn into it.[43] In 1960, following daily visits from these mixed teams, over half of the 77 associations created in the district of Aiud between 1952 and 1959 had been transformed into collectives. By March 1961, 20 more had become collectives, with the rest left for autumn 1961 or winter 1962, when many of them were absorbed into already existing collectives. This is roughly what happened in the two villages analyzed below: the collective in Măgina was merged with that in Aiudul de Sus in 1962; in Colţeşti, the older collective farm "Új élet" (Hungarian for "New Life") in Rimetea absorbed the association organized in 1960.

2. THE DISTRICT OF TURDA

Although situated in a predominantly mountainous area less suited for agriculture, the district of Turda created a notably large number of collectives—a total of 16—during the first phase of collectivization.[44] By 1950, almost half of the district's 33 villages had established collectives,[45] two of which were inaugurated on the same day. While this pattern was not customary in other districts, it can be attributed to the fact that collectivization work in Turda—both at the level of the Provisional District Council and at that of the RWP County Committee (which was later made into a district)—had been carefully tailored to fit individual cases. Moreover, the Securitate's role there was extremely effective. The commander of the Turda Office, Major Kovács, and the Chief of the Cluj District Office, Mihail Patriciu, were later investigated for the shooting of peasants in several of the dis-

trict's villages. In consequence of the brutalities committed, both lost their positions. Regardless, the Securitate's actions had the intended impact on the collectivization campaign, as Major Kovács candidly reported on October 6, 1950:

> The reality is that the two collectives were formed only after the shooting of Bihoreanu and Lelut […] The case of the three *chiaburi* [from the village of Bistra, plasa Câmpeni] proved that the procedure was working, that by shooting the three *chiaburi* who sheltered [enemies of the people] and by making the bandits' families bury them, we succeeded in getting none other than the bandits' own cousin to tell us their whereabouts.[46]

By the latter part of 1951, the Party authorities seem to have been concerned more with consolidating the existing collectives than with creating new ones.[47] By February 1952, not one new collective had been formed, although the leadership councils of the 13 existing collectives had been partially or completely replaced.[48] Meanwhile, the persuasion campaign for the creation of new GACs went on in parallel. With three reportedly functioning collectives (in Iacobeni, with 49 peasants[49] and 52 ha; Luna, with 29 collectivists and 33 ha; and Triteni Colonie, with 11 signed up and no land), organizers forged ahead with preparations to form new collectives in other communities (Tritenii de Jos and Gligoreşti).[50] To strengthen the existing ones, they launched recruitment campaigns, but only 42 citizens filed petitions with the district, one of which was rejected. Measures were, of course, taken to eliminate "unhealthy elements," *chiaburi*, from the collectives.[51]

The Turda county organizational plan to form new collectives and associations began again in May 1952. On May 28th, the "Plan of Action" for the period ending September 1 was drawn up and discussed. According to this plan, by June 4th, all department heads and employees of the People's Council were to be evaluated on their knowledge accumulated through the processing of the documents required to create collectives and associations "to ascertain whether each employee knows them in detail."[52] Next came "field work," that is, all employees were to go to the villages and organize workshops to demonstrate this documentation process to the local members of executive committees, deputies and employees, in order to train them in "persuasion work for the creation of collectives and associations."[53] The district's delegates were told exactly where to go and were expected to spend at least three days a week on assignment "to coordinate and finalize" persuasion activity. At the same time, the delegates were also to revise the *chiaburi* lists, "advising the village executive committee to have all *chiaburi* fulfill the daily tasks expected of them as per the state or the local plan,"[54] and to identify all the state's land reserves.

The use of propaganda was to be maximized during the summer "to train citizens who had been in the USSR in popularizing the achievements of the Soviet system of *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes*." The presidents of the collectives were to visit the villages slated for collectivization and give speeches. Also, groups of citizens

were to visit the most representative collectives in the district, and artistic ensembles were to present public performances (e.g., plays, songs and dances) dedicated to the socialist transformation of agriculture. According to the list put together for the occasion, 20 employees of the People's Council, supervised by members of the District Executive Committee, were to help organize ten collectives and nine associations.[55] This "brigade of ad-hoc organizers" would meet two or three times a month to analyze the evolution of the collectivization process.

Despite all these efforts, only four new collectives had been created by September 1953, increasing the district's total to 20. The number of associations had not risen either, although the five associations formed in 1952 continued to function.[56] Not only had the plan's goal not been met with regard to the number of GACS, but the ones newly formed in Rimetea, Văleni, and Mihai Viteazul—not specified in the plan of May 1952—had serious organizational and operational problems. A September 1953 report notes that land parcels had not yet been consolidated in some of the new collectives (e.g., Tritenii de Sus, Văleni and Rimetea),[57] that the organization of agricultural work suffered because "a large number of collectivists did not come to work regularly" (e.g., Ceanul Mare, Rimetea, Iacobeni, Mihai Viteazul and Luncani) and that the aforementioned collectives' leadership councils "do not function well because they allow themselves to be influenced by certain collectivists and therefore do not follow through with the decisions taken in the general assembly meetings."[58] These organizational deficiencies were compounded by the "presence of the class enemy," *chiaburi*, who were accused of inciting peasants to leave the collectives because "those outside the collective had had a better wheat production and their quotas were smaller than those of the collectivists." Also, "following a misinterpretation of the Hungarian Prime Minister's speech" and the negative influence of *chiaburi*, 57 peasants from Tritenii de Sus and 81 from Luncani (most of them Hungarians) petitioned to leave the collective. Despite administrative pressure and the provision of technical and financial support, the situation did not improve over the following years. By September 1954, the number of collectives in the district grew by only one, in Urca, where the "persuasion of the peasants" had been ongoing since 1952.[59] The only benefit, apart from no further agitation from the class enemy, was a better organization of activities, accounting and planning, which can be seen in the increase of the number of "reports" available in the archives.[60] The same tendencies continued through 1956, by the end of which another collective and 24 associations had been created.[61] The number of families engaged in Turda's collectives during these years is also indicative of general stagnation. In September 1954 there were 1,981 families registered in the district's collectives; by September 1957 they numbered 2,006, an increase of 25 families in three years.[62] The number of families involved in the associations was more encouraging, membership having tripled; even so, the district ranked next to last in the region.[63] With respect to social structure, a decade after the inauguration of the collectivization drive, families with little or no land still accounted for 66% of the GACs' members and over 50% of the associations' members.[64]

This latter percentage is, nonetheless, misleading because families joining associations contributed only 10% to 15% of their land.

The overall situation changed considerably in 1958, when the number of peasants participating in collective forms of agriculture doubled. By 1959, the total came to 120, with an impressive 16,718 families integrated into them.[65] The authorities planned for the incorporation of 23,500 families after 1960. Even so, a regional report underscored that the district of Turda was well behind in reaching its goals, and with only 55% of its territory collectivized, occupied the penultimate place in the (socialist) competition between districts. The district of Aiud was ahead, with almost 68% of its territory collectivized.[66] The situation in Turda was attributed both to its authorities' lack of commitment and to the weak economic and organizational performance of the older collectives.

In this section, I have reviewed the stages of collectivization in these two districts that emerged from my analysis of district and regional archival documents, with particular attention to quantitative data. These latter facilitate additional interpretive nuance. In the final section, I will examine the way in which collectivization was accomplished in Rimetea and Măgina, villages located in close proximity to each other but in different districts. These cases illustrate not only the stages of the process, but the modalities through which collectivization was achieved in the two districts.

3. MĂGINA

The village of Măgina, which belonged to the commune of Cacova until 1963, is some five kilometers from the town of Aiud, which was a district center in the region of Cluj at the time of the collectivization. Census data regarding the social development of Măgina presents a general picture of stagnation and a lack of modernization. In 1910 the village had 843 inhabitants; by 1930, that number had dropped to 842 villagers who comprised 198 households.[67] The population continued to decline through the first decade of communism, dropping to 790,[68] even though the number of households increased to 211. According to villagers, young people who were employed in urban areas had the money to build houses in the village, accounting for the growth in the number of households. In 1955 the commune of Măgina had 1,010 ha of farmland, ranking among the lowest in the district in terms of arable land and soil quality. However, it ranked first for its orchards, which covered 133 ha, and was relatively high in other categories: 153 ha of hayfields, 246 ha of pastures, 22 ha of vineyards and 10 ha of vegetable gardens.[69] By the time the collective was founded in 1961, the village of Măgina had a total of 434 ha, of which there were 338 ha of arable land, 42 ha of hayfields, 11 ha of vineyards, 23 ha of orchards, 4 ha of pastures and 6 ha of fallow land.

The socialist accumulation of property in Măgina began relatively late and progressed in several stages. Initially, the village's few Party members created an embryonic collective in the form of an association (referred to by some of my

interlocutors as the "collective's baby chick").[70] However, it was neither economically nor politically successful. The collectivization process nonetheless went on, with membership growing as a result of several brief but intensive persuasion campaigns that exploited both the available mechanisms of economic control (e.g., quotas, taxation, contracts, etc.) and interpersonal pressures and constraints. District activists carried out the persuasion work, drawing on techniques associated with negotiation: argumentation, promises, threats, rewards and the granting of favors.

The first stage of collectivization began in April 1956, when, at the initiative of his Party superiors, the Chairman of the Initiative Committee and Secretary of the RWP local Party chapter, Dumitru Bărăştean, organized the campaign to form the association. In a progress report prepared on April 15, 1956, representatives of this committee (Dumitru Bărăştean, Andrei Avram, and Florian Pitiriciu—all Party members)[71] declared that "through political activity carried out by the local Party chapter and the Initiative Committee, [they] managed to convince 16 hardworking peasants to join the agricultural association, and [did so] in strict conformity with the principle of free consent." But having only 17 families[72] and 7 ha, which had been merged into three groupings, the new association was from its very beginning considered little more than an experiment. For some peasants, including several who later became part of the association's leadership,[73] it "did not last longer than a year, the land having been taken from the church." For others, it represented the political fault lines existing in the community.[74] Most, however, viewed it as an enterprise without much of a future. Even those who created it recognized that it would be rather difficult to convince others to participate in this socialist form of association.

At the General Assembly meeting held on April 15, 1956, the minutes indicated that Florian Pitiriciu came up with a strategy to enlarge the association, namely to go after villagers who worked for wages and who also had farmland.[75] But according to the activity report for 1957, that did not seem to have improved the situation, although the additional five families that joined the association brought another hectare of land into it. Contrary to the promises made by the district's representatives in 1956 ("the land will be worked in optimal conditions, using tractors and combines, and technicians from the Agricultural Section will assist the association,"[76]), the land was worked using the peasants' traditional means of production (plows, carts, etc.), and hoeing was done individually. In the end, the results of all this were negligible and translated into no financial benefit.

Only at the beginning of the 1960s, following an aggressive campaign, did the association's membership increase. According to data that the association's leaders compiled, "membership" developed as follows: as of October 1, 1959, only one additional family had joined the initial 17. The Agricultural Section of the Aiud People's Council reported on October 9, 1959 that Măgina's association "Fallow Land" consisted of 174 families.[77] While the number of families was far smaller in reality, as other documents corroborate, the higher number may have referred to

a potential waitlist associated with the project that was to be implemented in the next stage.[78] In October 1959, meetings were held in the school building to convince peasants to join the association, one of whom recollected how persuasion work was carried out:

> They'd come in the evening, just as we were coming back from work. We used to hide from them, but then we saw that they started to persuade the wealthier ones, then the ones who were just a little bit better off… after that it was our turn, those in the third category… Well! Let's join too, what the hell can we do? And we signed up, three or four families, about ten people. Then they moved the others over there, they relocated them at the edge of the village somewhere. Then they'd come again in the evening, they'd take a few of them away, give them a good beating, because that's the only way they were able to win them over. Otherwise it wasn't possible.[79]

The persuasion campaign did not immediately yield results. Hence, on January 30, 1960, the authorities launched an aggressive campaign to integrate new members from which villagers could not escape.[80]

Within a year, Măgina's lands were fully merged and a new campaign was launched to persuade villagers to transform their association into a GAC. On instructions from Aiud, an Initiative Committee was formed to organize the collective. The same procedures and the same cast of characters as those involved in forming the association were activated: Nicolae Cristea, the association's president, Andrei Avram, the former secretary-treasurer (replaced in 1957 by the former collector, Iulian Avram), Dumitru Bărăştean, Toma Rusu, an elementary school teacher and Florian Pitiriciu. Partly as a reaction to the pressures that this group exerted, a new faction emerged within the Party organization, led by the former "illegalist" Victor Mărginean. Even though Bărăştean coordinated the persuasion campaign, the political bureau of the local Party organization split internally, engendering a parallel campaign to enlarge the Party's base in the village. In effect, a generational shift in the Party leadership took place while the association transformed into a collective. Victor Mărginean engaged in discussions with a large number of poor peasants, as one recounted:

> Hey, he once took us aside in a friendly way, me and a guy who was a relative of his, and said, "Be there." So when collectivization happened, I was chosen to be part of the revision committee… The old man was the chief of the committee! And with him, we'd go through the village from time to time to persuade people. This Marginean was really, really honest and really correct. He didn't harm anyone! He'd say: Hey, sign up, come on! Let's take these guys down! Because they're good for nothing! These aren't communists! He kept explaining that these guys were just using people and what not… And so we too somehow went and registered as Party members…[81]

Also in 1960, at the height of the collectivization campaign and its politicization, the person who was to be the GAC's Vice President and Secretary of its local Party chapter for over twenty years joined the Party. He revealed an important aspect of the Party's strategy for increasing its base: "…as soon as they realized a person was somewhat hardworking, they had to bring them into the RCP. […] I'm proud of the fact that not one of them was kicked out while I was the Secretary."[82]

On January 10, 1961, in the presence of three district representatives, the Initiative Committee for the creation of the collective in Măgina was formed. Its members included Ioan Avram, the President of the association; Iulian Avram, a collections agent; Eugen Bărăştean, the President of the cooperative; Constantin Rusu, the Secretary of the association; and Candin Felindean, a member of the local Party chapter. Ion Avram and Iulian Avram were selected to fill the positions of president and secretary of the committee. For more than two months, the committee supervised the transition from the old to the new form of ownership, having convinced the peasants of the socialist justness of giving up their own property. As of March 16, 1961, following the "sustained work deployed in the village, in the people's assemblies, and by groups of families," 169 families (providing 105 men and 111 women as "work hands") had joined out of a total of 226 families in the village (none of whom were landless). Of these, 104 families had small land holdings, with the remaining 65 categorized as middle peasants.[83] They brought into the GAC approximately 78 percent of the total agricultural area to be collectivized: 337 ha, of which there were 255 ha of arable land, 42 ha of hayfields, 4 ha of pastures, 21 ha of orchards, 9 ha of vineyards and 6 ha of unproductive land, which represented an average of 2 ha per household. At the time the collective was created, the 57 families that had not joined owned about 97 ha, 83 of which were arable land, 10 of which were hayfields, 2 ha were vineyards and 2 ha were orchards. These figures give us a sense of the economic potential of those who had joined the new economic and political structure and of the economic capacity of the village.

On the occasion of the March 26, 1981 official inauguration of GAC "May 8th," the Initiative Committee carefully detailed the collective's inventory in its report. By analyzing this document or the standard petitions to join the collective, it is possible—with few exceptions—to identify the properties that became part of the collective.[84] The petitions and the lists that the Inventory Committee created show that collectivization in Măgina produced a significant reduction in individual property holdings. Those who had joined had owned between 7.81 ha and approximately 0.2 ha. (There was also the case of Victor Chiorean who additionally had to contribute an ox to be accepted in the collective, his initial petition having been torn up on March 17.) It is important to note that those who took over the "May 8" collective were not the poor peasants, as had happened elsewhere, but rather represented the category of wealthy peasants, the "*gospodari*" or "*gazde*" as they were called in the village.

It seems that the district authorities had orchestrated this outcome. By March 14, 1961, when the "Act to Establish the GAC"[85] was drafted, the General Assembly meeting of the association members who had petitioned to join the collective farm had not taken place, and the leadership of the collective had not yet been elected. (The election would take place on March 26.) Yet, the above-mentioned Act listed the names of the president, Vasile Fufezan, and of the accountant, Traian Palcu, whose nominations were put forth 12 days later at the new GAC's inauguration. Completely out of the ordinary and against all accepted procedures required by Party instructions, not one member of the Initiative Committee, nor anyone elected or proposed by the villagers, presided over this meeting. Instead, Vasile Groza, the President of the People's Council of the Aiud district, did so. This subterfuge was apparently necessary to avoid the risk of having someone else get nominated or elected. Eventually, the intervention of the President of the People's Council proved decisive, there having been two people nominated for the position of president of the collective: "…comrade Groza Vasile proposes to discuss [the nomination of] comrade Fufezan Vasile. Comrade Costan Vasile should not propose Avram Ioan until the discussion of Fufezan Vasile is concluded. He [Groza Vasile] is in favor of Fufezan Vasile."[86] The RWP Secretary Mărginean accused Fufezan Vasile, the person Groza nominated, of having family members who had been legionaries. This accusation brought former complicities to the fore and generated rumors among the audience. Eventually, and with pressure from the center, the rule of unanimity won out. Vasile Fufezan became president and Ioan Avram became vice- president (after another villager had withdrawn his candidacy for the latter position). In this way, even though the Revision Committee had been stacked with members of the local Party chapter, wealthier villagers came to be the leaders of the newly founded collective. The accountant had over 5 ha, and Fufezan had 5.6 ha.

Looking beyond the statistical data, several conclusions can be drawn about the way in which collectivization unfolded in Măgina. The process of collectivization was initiated in the form of an association and fully subordinated to the small Party chapter of the village's RWP comprised of poor peasants, which was, according to some, receptive to certain clan interests. It concluded with wealthy peasants at the forefront of the GAC's leadership, under whose direction the collective managed to function. Even though some 10 families ultimately resisted collectivization,[87] most did not. Because collectivization in Măgina occurred late, it contributed to the "forced" acceptance of this new status and the resulting loss of property. By that time, many villagers had been reduced to poverty and their capacity to resist had greatly diminished. They had also lost hope that the Americans would come or that the regime would ever change, additional factors that had played an important role in their capitulation. Indeed, by then, the communist regime was fully institutionalized, leaving the peasants to find strategies to survive and adapt to its rules.

4. RIMETEA

If collectivization in Măgina took place in two stages, in Rimetea the process underwent three: the first began in 1952 when the collective was formed, comprising about 10 percent of the community's population and 20 percent of its land; the second started in 1959 when the collective was enlarged through the inclusion of the majority of Rimetea's families; and the third occurred in 1961 when the association in the neighboring village of Colțeşti (administratively a part of Rimetea) was integrated into the collective in Rimetea.

The collective was formed with the Ministry of Agriculture's approval on October 19, 1952. Initially, in September, 88 people—49 women and 39 men—joined the GAC "Új élet." By the time the collective was officially inaugurated, 20 more villagers had joined, bringing the total to 108. Persuasion work for the creation of the collective had begun in June 1952, when a delegation of 8–10 members of the Rimetea RWP local Party chapter visited "The Victory of Socialism" collective in Iara, which had been in operation since July 16, 1950. On that occasion, "visiting not only the cultivated land but also the houses of the people in the collective [...] they were convinced that those people had everything they needed and lacked nothing." As a result of that visit, the delegates believed that "the rumors spread by the kulaks are outrageous lies," and proceeded to "thoroughly enlighten the working class about the tenets of the RWP [...] highlighting the superiority of the Soviet kolkhozes and their successes [...] persuading the poor and middle peasants of Rimetea that only the socialist transformation of our agriculture could forever free us from the *chiabur*'s exploitation and secure for us and our relatives a better and happier life."[88]

Following the proposal of the Turda district Party Committee and the initiative of Crişan Gavrilă, the person responsible for organizing collectives in the district of Turda, an Initiative Committee was created in Rimetea in the summer of 1952. This committee, consisting of five people, together with members of the District People's Committee and engineers from the Agricultural Section, drafted the statute of the "New Life" collective. At the same time an intensive campaign to recruit members was launched. It should be noted here that in May 1952, when a plan of action was adopted to collectivize several villages, Rimetea was not among those targeted. As a consequence of the difficulties that arose in the village of Urca, and the probable interests of some of the Party members from Rimetea, Crişan Gavrilă took over the creation of the GAC there. The process unfolded at a fast pace, and by July 12, 1952, 42 households had already been registered to join the future GAC. The atmosphere of terror undoubtedly contributed to this development.

An important village in which most men worked in construction, masonry, and carpentry—traditionally having been involved in mining and quarrying—Rimetea was not typical of villages collectivized in the first stage of the process. Situated in a mountainous region far from the center of the district,[89] with poor

quality farmland and lacking an agricultural tradition, the village had, nonetheless, been heavily politicized from the very beginning. In 1952, 82 people were members of the RWP, 35 were in the Plowmen's Front, 55 in the Young Workers' Union, 200 in the Union of the Democratic Women of Romania and 276 in the Hungarian People's Union. In comparison with Măgina and other villages collectivized in the district of Turda, Rimetea was an exceptional case.[90] One of the interviewees remarked: "Those who formed the collective were locals, those who joined were communists. But they were acting on orders from the county activists. Among them there was a woman we nicknamed Ana Pauker because she was very active."[91] Another factor that contributed to the "rapid socialist transformation of agriculture" in Rimetea was the absence of men in the village. To reiterate, agriculture had never been a strength in this village. Most men worked elsewhere,[92] leaving the land to the toil of day laborers. In the nearby village of Colțeşti, people often made fun of their neighbors' lack of aptitude, even distaste, for agricultural work, commenting sarcastically that "in Rimetea the sun rises two hours after we get to the fields."[93]

Although all of the conditions needed to create a collective in Rimetea had been met, with the first stage of the persuasion campaign reaching a peak in June and July, the Party organizer failed to note the campaign's semi-failure occasioned by his having reported that 42 families had joined when only 22 had actually signed petitions to do so. A brief review of the dates of their filing suggests how the campaign unfolded.[94] Countless pressures had been exerted on those targeted, including the imposition of higher quotas, classification as *chiaburi*, increased threats and beatings, as well as promises made regarding their children's or families' futures. The second phase of the persuasion campaign followed in mid-September 1952,[95] when mostly wealthy peasants who had been categorized as middle peasants joined, even though some of them owned more than seven ha of land.[96]

Because the first stage had not produced the expected results—only 22 of the 42 families that had been "planned" to join did so by July 12th—the authorities resorted to administrative measures. They replaced the leadership of the Provisional Committee (later the People's Council), which had been installed with great difficulty in 1949. While the new President, Ştefan Mathe, had himself petitioned to join on June 30, 1952, he proved to be "indulgent with the village *chiaburi*" and not overly preoccupied with the collective. The GAC organizer's presence in the village, combined with his knowledge of the situation and the litany of denunciations he heard, quickly led to the replacement of both the president and secretary of the Executive Committee of the People's Council. In their stead, two prominent local Party activists, Klára Szász and Iosif Ferenczi, were appointed on July 7, 1952.[97] This administrative change contributed directly to the acceleration of the "socialist transformation of agriculture" in Rimetea. The new administrative leader, Klára Szász (the local "Ana Pauker," as mentioned above), immediately convened a committee charged with updating the *chiaburi* lists. Only five

days after she was appointed, the 12 *chiaburi* from Rimetea and 6 from Colțeşti reported by the previous administration on March 27 1952[98] were joined by another 12 from Rimetea and 3 from Colțeşti.[99]

Moreover, in her quest to find additional "class enemies," the new president of the Executive Committee formed a committee to review the category of "*chiabur*" and propose new criteria to broaden it. In September 1952 the committee produced a report about 31 *chiaburi*, some of whom were included on the basis of their pasts, or other puerile reasons.[100] For instance, Niculae Simon was a pub keeper between 1935–1939, had 7.69 ha and rented some of his land to others; Ştefan Toth had a tailor's shop, with two journeymen, and 2.65 ha of land; Iosif Vernes, 2.4 ha, the village pub keeper between 1947–1950; Iosif Criza, 0.86 ha, had two pubs before 1944; and Ana Tobias, owning 6.6 ha, had always used seasonal laborers to work her farm.[101]

In a village where most men were skilled laborers often working elsewhere, and where peasants from neighboring villages always came looking for seasonal farm labor, it was difficult to decide who was not a *chiabur*.[102] On September 16, 1952, the General Assembly approved the new GAC's statute, after which 26 more poor and middle peasant families were persuaded to join the collective.

During its first few years the collective was a negative example of collectivization's alleged promises in the district and the region.[103] Nonetheless, collectivization continued apace according to the regional planning process. 1959 represented the second stage of the overall collectivization drive during which the peasants of Rimetea had to part with their properties. It is interesting that the new persuasion campaign did not enlist the collective's members as had happened in 1952:

> […] in keeping with the instructions received from the district Party committee and closely supported by the village Party committee, in March of this year, following an expanded meeting of the executive committee, 5 teams made up of employees of the People's Council and of teaching personnel were formed in Rimetea and 3 in Colțeşti, tasked with attracting new members into the collective and the agricultural association, based solely on political work.[104]

Like its predecessor, this campaign employed diverse kinds of pressures, and, not surprisingly, yielded impressive results. 159 families with 255 ha of land joined the collective, doubling the number of families that had joined in 1952, if with only a slight increase in the number of hectares.[105] A report submitted in 1961, just prior to the third stage of collectivization, when the association in Colțeşti was unified with the collective, shows that only 225 families had been integrated into the "New life" collective. This meant that 26 families had managed to "renounce" further participation in it.[106]

The destructive local effects of Decree no. 115, issued in 1959, were more telling, having resulted in the doubling of the collective's land by 1961. The 200-some hectares that the collective held between 1952 and 1958 were augmented in

March 1959 by another 255 ha, bringing the total to 455 ha. By 1961, that number had increased to 758 ha, of which 69 were used for the members' individual use.[107] In other words, those who had not joined the collective lost the land that authorities deemed to be in excess of what peasants were able to cultivate on their own. Because many men worked in other domains, this practice was relatively easy to justify. The increase in the collective's land patrimony led to the highest average production per hectare of wheat in 1959, namely 1,951 kilos. Yet one year later—as witness to the weaknesses and lack of efficiency of collective farming—the collective reported its lowest production figures, only 875 kilograms of wheat per hectare.[108] The situation again improved when the Colțeşti villagers joined the collective; most of them were farmers, who managed to turn around the collective's efficiency and image.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In an attempt to evaluate the process of collectivization in terms of the strategies and actions promoted by the regional and district Party authorities, I have analyzed the way in which these unfolded in two administrative units in the center of Transylvania, examining how and in what stages they occurred in two villages. Although the process of collectivization should have been justified primarily by economic and social reasons, its content was preeminently political. Initially, between 1949 and 1952, the stage in which the process was centralized, collectivization was poorly organized. Its outcomes resulted more from policing actions than from the strict implementation at the local level of instructions from the center. Local activists—the district's political secretaries, heads of the Agricultural Section, or the organizers of the collectives—played decisive roles in the creation of the collectivist structures. Their interests and ambitions influenced the way in which collectivization was carried out in both districts analyzed here. Often, however, the initiative came from the communities themselves, where certain groups of local activists, themselves in need of political legitimacy, supported the launching of the collectivization process irrespective of ethnicity and religion, local topography, or other considerations (Rimetea in 1952 and Măgina in 1956, 1961).

Factionalism was present not only at the level of the Party organizations but within communities themselves. The communist authorities aptly exploited old rivalries, family relations and changes in local social hierarchies. To build the collective, they played upon divisions in the community, regardless of individual sentiments or other personal interests. The following remarks offered by one of the participants in the persuasion campaign underscored such calculated manipulation:

> It was achieved because we kept after them and eventually, we convinced them; they had no way out and sooner or later, they signed the petition to… What they felt, that… that was their problem!!! However, you should know

> that there were also people who wanted to join, the poor, and there were probably Party members among them too. And if the Party said so, they had to conform. But among them, they too were divided into two camps! Those who wanted to join and those who didn't…[109]

As the regime matured, local initiatives began to disappear; regional and district authorities more attentively coordinated the unfolding of the process. Over the next years, in the interest both of creating collectives and of stabilizing the regime, they formulated a general collectivization specifying the political education activities to take place at the local level. Such preparations notwithstanding, even in the final stage of the collectivization process, the imposition of physical and material constraints ultimately remained decisive in the formation of the new collectivist structures.

Translated from Romanian by Liana Grancea and Gail Kligman

NOTES

1 Cluj was also the center of the 27 Region of RWP, the newly founded administrative structure being subordinated to the regional Party authorities.
2 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Comitetul Provizoriu al Judeţului Cluj. Secretariat," file 9/1950,1–12.
3 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Comitetul Provizoriu al Judeţului Cluj. Secretariat," file 17/1950, 1085–1087.
4 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 4/1952, 278–280. With the new districts, the number of collectives in the region increased by 55.
5 See the discussion of the collectives in the districts of Arad, Odverem and Şoimuş.
6 49 collectives and 83 associations were inaugurated in the Cluj region between January 1, 1952 and December 3, 1953. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 22/1954, 41, 91–97.
7 On the growth of the number of collective farms, see DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 13/1957, ff. 74–75; file 76/1959, 70–71.
8 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Provizoriu Aiud," file 58–64/1950.
9 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 1/1950, 74.
10 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 4/1951, 87–88.
11 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 1/1950, 110–112; file 11/1951, 62–66.
12 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 1/1950, 46; file 11/1951, 55–56.
13 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 11/1951, 36.
14 See the stenogram of the meeting between the delegation of peasants from Şoimuş and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Ana Pauker, in ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR-Cancelarie," file 19/1951, 2–7, cited in Mihaela Cristina Verzea, "Delegaţie de ţărani din Şoimuş în audientă la Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. Realităţi proprii colectivizării româneşti," *Muzeul naţional* (Bucharest, 2002), 379–388.
15 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 11/1951, 148–155.
16 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 11/1951, 36.

17 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 11/1951, 25–61; file 23/1952, 6–36, 238–242.
18 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 56/1955, 6–7.
19 ASRI, Fond "D," File 8418, 24.
20 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 238–240.
21 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 32.
22 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 32.
23 Accordingly, three new GACs had to be created, in Rădeşti, Lopadea and Ciuguzel. See DJAN Cluj, "Fond Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 1/1951, 258.
24 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 11/1951, 55–56.
25 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 11/1951, 23.
26 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 51/1954, 90.
27 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 51/1954, 83. In Măgina the association was created only in 1956; in Unirea a collective was established in 1952. Although early in 1952 it had seemed likely that an association would be formed, the plan was abandoned after the local Party chapter dissolved.
28 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 1–5.
29 "Note on the instructions regarding the amendments to the Decision of the Central Committee of the RWP of September 18, 1951," November 15, 1952; "Note regarding the local Party chapter's analysis of the Central Committee of the RWP's document [sic!], for the information of the regional and district Party authorities," DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 238–240, 264–267.
30 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 34–36, 88–89.
31 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 11/1951, 112; Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 107/1952–1954, 42–43.
32 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 137/1952, passim, file 23/1952, 149, 275–279.
33 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 149–161, 264–265.
34 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 266–267.
35 In May 1954, after more than two years of persuasion work, the GAC "May 1" was formed in Noşlac with only 14 families and 43 hectares of land. See DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 19/1954, 44.
36 The former was officially inaugurated on April 12, and the second, on April 19, 1953.
37 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud, file 51/1954, 10; Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 19/1954, 30.
38 See DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 19/1954 and 39/1954.
39 In Rădeşti, for instance, the president of the People's Council was removed from office because "Comrade Kulcsar, the former First-, made clear to him that if he does not add Nicula Aron and Deceanu Niculae to the list of chiaburi, he [Kulcsar] will arrange for all three of them to be sent together to the canal." See DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 23/1952, 265–267.
40 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 8/1953, 88–89.
41 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 8/1953, 191.
42 Previously, in 1951–1952, training generally took place only after appointment to their respective positions; it happened at the district office once each month and lasted a full day. See the list of those proposed to undergo training in DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 15/1953–1957, 159.

43 Interview with I.V., a teacher who participated for two years in the persuasion campaigns in various villages in the district of Aiud.
44 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Comitetul Provizoriu al Judeţului Cluj. Secretariat," file 17/1950, 1085–1087. Two years later, a report noted that there were only 13 functioning GACs in the district. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 4/1952, 471–472.
45 A report in 1951 regarding the "Situation of the collectives in the Region of Cluj" discussed the rate at which collectives were formed: 3 in 1949, 6 in the spring of 1950 (February–March), 53 throughout the rest of 1950, and one in the first quarter of 1951. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 4/1952, 349 verso-350.
46 See documents from ASRI, Fond "D," file 4638, 125–175. These documents were also published in Octavian Roske, ed., "Colectivizarea agriculturii. Tipologia represiunii. Execuţii demonstrative, 1950," *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, II (1994) 4, 132–152; Gheorghe Iancu and Virgiliu Ţârău, "Un episod din implicarea Securităţii în colectivizarea agriculturii româneşti," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj-Napoca*, XXXVII (1998), 267–298; Marius Oprea, ed., *Banalitatea răului. O istorie a Securităţii în documente, 1949–1989* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2002), 212–219. The documents from the Archives of Securitate include an inquiry from the General Directorate of People's Safety regarding the crimes perpetrated by commander Mihail Kovács, on orders received from Mihail Patriciu, the Cluj Securitate chief.
47 For the first quarter, the regional authorities planned the creation of collectives in Poiana, Tureni, Gligoreşti, and Ceanul Mic. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 1/195, 258.
48 46 leaders and 32 members of review committees were replaced. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 4/1952, 471.
49 The local newspaper *Turda Nouă* [New Turda] announced on January 20, 1952 that "after visiting the village of Luncani, the working peasants of Iacobeni decided to unite together in a collective farm," in *Turda Nouă,* IV (20 January 1952) 113, 3.
50 In order to boost the development of collective farms, positions of so-called GAC organizers were created at the district level.
51 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 4/1952, 472.
52 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 6/1952, 152.
53 Fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the "Guidelines regarding the work for the creation of new associations and collectives." See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 4/1952 "Secţia Agricolă," 257–261.
54 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 6/1952, 152.
55 Rimetea was not included in this action plan, although the same measures were applied there too; the organizer in the village of Urca—in charge of the collective sector at the district level—was the one directly involved with organizing the collective in Rimetea. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 6/1952, 153.
56 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 17/1953, 34
57 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 18/1953, 571.
58 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 18/1953, 34–36.
59 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 93/1954, 197.
60 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 93/1954, 196.
61 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 18/1956, 46, 105, 107.
62 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 18/1956, 46, 105, 107.

63 The total number of families in associations was 988, of which 583 had small land holdings land 405 were classified as middle peasants. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 13/1957, 74.
64 According to statistics on the composition of GACS by number of families, the district Turda was second in the region, with 1,060 poor, 720 middle and 426 landless families. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 76/1959, 70.
65 The number of GAC increased from 208 in 1958 to 284 in 1959. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 76/1959, 70.
66 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 76/1959, 72.
67 Sabin Manuilă, ed., *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decemvrie 1930* (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1931), vol. 9, 20.
68 See *Structura demografică a populației*, vol. 3, 34. Of the 211 families in the village, there were 100 middle peasants, 108 poor peasants, and three wealthy See DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Cacova," file 82/1956.
69 DJAN Alba, fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 56/1955, 60.
70 Interviews I.I., born in 1920, poor, initially a member of the censorship committee, then GAC work team supervisor until the 1970s when he became simply a member, June 2002; G.C., born in 1918, poor, GAC member; C.I., born in 1921, poor, work team supervisor.
71 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 56/1955, 6–7.
72 The average surface of collectivized land was 0.50 ha. See DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 56/1957, 4–6. In 1957, five other families joined the association that then had 8 ha of land, with members keeping more than 43 ha out of the association. See DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 97/1957, 16.
73 Interview A.I., born in 1927, poor, GAC vice-president in 1961, August 2002.
74 Interview F.I., born in 1914, middle-peasant, former employee of Aiud People's Council; A.M., born in 1925, middle-peasant, GAC member, farmer; I.I. and P.A. (the latter born in 1919, poor, GAC member and later on, worker) emphasized that "it is the political zeal of some of the villagers that led to the establishment of the TOZ and later on of the GAC farm."
75 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 56/1957, 4–5.
76 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 56/1957, 5.
77 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 7/1959, 7.
78 DJAN Alba, Fond "Comitetul Raional PMR Aiud," file 142/1958, 36–38.
79 Interview I.I., May 2002.
80 DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Cacova," file 84/1960, 32–34.
81 Interview I.I., June 2002.
82 Interview A.I., August 2002.
83 DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Cacova," file 66/1961, 33–39.
84 Originals can be found in Arhiva Primăriei Municipiului Aiud, file no. I-B-2.
85 I came across this document in the Arhiva Municipiului Aiud, file GAC "8 Mai" Măgina. It had been recorded as number 458 on March 14, 1961 in the archives of People's Council of the Cacova commune.
86 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 66/1961, 3–9.
87 Resistance was difficult because repression against peasants became subtler over time. Persuasion played an important role in this respect. For instance, whereas in the 1950s

children were not accepted in schools unless their parents joined the collective farms, in the 1960s, children were sent home to persuade their parents.

88 Arhiva Asociației Agricole din Rimetea, 1952, Inventar no. 1, folder 1, 2–5.

89 See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular al Regiunii Cluj," file 4/1952, 454–457.

90 The 42 families had the following political affiliations: eight RWP members, three members of the Plowmen's Front, 11 members of the Young Workers' Union, 40 members of the Union of the Democratic Women of Romania and 34 members of the Hungarian People's Union. See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 4/1952, 454–456.

91 U.S., born in 1929, GAC member and middle-peasant. Most of the interviews in Rimetea and Colțeşti were in Hungarian. I thank my colleagues, Tamas Lonhart and Ottmar Traşcă, for helping me translate the interviews into Romanian.

92 A report mentions that 130 men from Rimetea were brick layers and were not in the village at that time. See DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Rimetea," file 11/1953, 160–163.

93 C.I.01, born in 1927, wealthy peasant (over 7 ha), became president of the collective farm in 1963; C.I.02, born in 1923, wealthy peasant, collective president at the end of the 1960s; U.I., born in 1926, middle peasant, joined in 1952 upon returning from army service, treasurer for a while. These interviews were done in June 2002 and December 2002.

94 Arhiva Asociației Agricole din Rimetea, vol. 1. GAC membership applications from Szabó Anna to Mitrea Ioan; vol. 2, GAC membership application from Lăcătuş Nicolae to Csupor Illona.

95 In September 18–21, over twenty families were persuaded to sign membership applications, as a result of pressure: "every night the black car would come, get them, take them to Turda, where they were beaten up then released home with the following words: 'Go home and think twice about this, because we will be back in three days and we'll ask you again'" (U.I.).

96 Statistics and interviews confirm that most of the new members were rich.

97 See Decision no. 8560 of the Executive Committee of the Popular Council of the Turda District, July 7, 1952. See also DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Rimetea," file 1/952, 154, and file 2/1952, 7.

98 DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Rimetea," file 1/1952, 71.

99 DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Rimetea," file 3/1952, 114–115.

100 DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Rimetea," file 2/1952, 11.

101 DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Rimetea," file 1/1952, 67–70.

102 One's current material circumstances were not primary in defining this category, but rather, the past played a crucial role. Thus, although Pall Stefan owned only 5.40 hectares, he was listed as a chiabur because he had inherited a thresher from his father. Another peasant was listed as a kulak because he had owned a stone quarry back in the 1930s in Lunca Arieşului. See DJAN Alba, Fond "Primăria Rimetea," file 10/1953, 40.

103 See DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional," file 17/1953, file 9 and 22/1954; Fond 49 "Comitetul Raional PMR Turda," file 6/1953, 10/1954, 7/1955.

104 DJAN Alba, Fond "Sfatul Popular Raional Aiud," file 23/1959, 15.

105 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Popular Regional Cluj," file 75/1959, 305.

106 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Regional al Regiunii Cluj," file 32/1961, 00238. According to these files, 48 families had no land at all, 85 had little property, and 92 were middle-peasants. Those who had the most land withdrew from the farm, but were unable to reclaim their land until after 1989.

107 DJAN Cluj, Fond "Sfatul Regional al Regiunii Cluj," file 32/1961, 00239–00240.
108 Arhiva Asociației Agricole Rimetea, file "Date generale de orientare cu privire la situația economică a unității pe anul precedent, 1961," 5.
109 Interview I.V., July 2002.

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G.C., born in 1918, man, poor, GAC member.
P.A., born in 1919, man, poor, GAC member, then worker.
H.M., born in 1929, woman, the daughter-in-law of one of the *chiaburi*, GAC member.
A.I., born in 1927, man, poor, GAC vice-president in 1961.
C.I., born in 1921, man, poor, work team supervisor.
F.I., born in 1914, man, middle-peasant, former employee at the Aiud People's Council.
I.V., born in 1936, man, school teacher, participated in the persuasion campaign from 1959 to 1961.

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B.A., born in 1923, man, poor, GAC member since 1961.
C.I.01, born in 1927, man, rich peasant, GAC president in 1963.
C.I.02, born in 1931, woman, C.I.01's wife.
U.I., born in 1926, man, middle-peasant, cashier for a short period upon return from the army.
U.S., born in 1929, woman, U.I's wife, GAC member in 1952.
S.A., born in 1923, man, poor, craftsman, GAC member in 1961.
B.A., born in 1926, woman, S.A.'s wife, GAC member.
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Collectivization in the Odorhei District (The Hungarian Autonomous Region)

SÁNDOR OLÁH

Historians from Hungary and Romania have generally neglected the postwar social history of ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania.[1] As a consequence, research on the collectivization of areas inhabited by this ethnic group is barely nascent. There is no theoretical or empirical academic literature to speak of on the topic, and the few relevant sources published after 1989 are generally limited to memoirs, interviews, a few articles and several manuscripts under review.[2] Recently, an interdisciplinary research group has initiated a project on the history of the short-lived Hungarian Autonomous Region (HAR, formed in 1952 from the present-day counties of Covasna, Harghita and Mureş),[3] in which they also tackled aspects of the process of land collectivization. I myself have approached this topic indirectly in a study of the struggle of peasants living the Homorod Valley to defend their traditional autonomy during the 1949–1962 period.[4]

This chapter provides a general overview of the history of collectivization in the Odorhei district, an administrative unit that was part of three different regions during the 1950–1962 period: the Stalin region between 1950 and 1952, the HAR between September 1952 and December 1962, and the Mureş-Hungarian Autonomous Region until 1968. The purpose of the chapter is to identify the impact of ethnicity and of administrative autonomy on the collectivization campaign in this Hungarian-dominated region. To this end, it explores the district's administrative and geographical characteristics, the organization of households, the pace of the local collectivization campaign relative to the process of collectivization at the national level, as well as the manipulation of class cleavages by authorities in order to further their objectives.

1. ETHNICITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY IN THE COLLECTIVIZATION CAMPAIGN

The HAR was established at the suggestion of the Soviet Union in 1952, along with the ratification of a new Constitution of communist Romania. Stalin and Molotov had personally reviewed the constitutional draft (published on July 18, 1952), including a proposition concerning the administrative reorganization of the above-mentioned region.

The HAR was a predominantly ethnic Hungarian land. In the February 1956 census, the region's 731,387 inhabitants (4.2 percent of Romania's population) had the following ethnic distribution: 77.32 percent Hungarian (565,510), 20 percent Romanian (146,830), 0.43 percent German (3,214), 0.41 percent Jewish (3,023) and other ethnic groups. Out of Romania's total Hungarian population, about a third lived in the HAR. Most of the region's inhabitants (71.5 percent) lived in villages, while the urban population accounted for less than half a million people (208,782). Migration to towns increased sharply during the 1950s, albeit mostly towards Târgu Mureş, the region's capital, whose population increased from 48,596 to 69,962 (so that by 1959, five HAR districts had smaller populations than the city of Târgu Mureş).[5]

The establishment of the HAR was meant to better facilitate the integration of ethnic Hungarians into the Romanian socialist state. The chief target population was that of the Szeklers [in Hungarian, the *Székely*], an ethnically homogeneous Hungarian group who engaged in actions deemed chauvinistic by the state leadership during the 1950s. The creation of the HAR was followed with great interest both by ethnic Hungarians in Romania and by the Hungarian state. In a report entitled "The Reverberations of the HAR," Wasner János, an attaché of the Hungarian Embassy in Bucharest wrote:

> The constitutional draft containing the establishment of HAR was received with enthusiasm by ethnic Hungarians, notably by the Szeklers […]. The right to use the Hungarian language in any state institution located within the HAR sparked the joy of many, particularly of those Hungarians who do not speak Romanian. At the same time, the establishment of HAR is expected to be detrimental to the interests of Romanian chauvinists who were rather put off by the granting of minority rights and who are now likely to be eliminated from public office (especially those living in the Szekler Land [in Hungarian, *Székelyföld*]). Some fear that the HAR might be plagued by economic difficulties, that transfers from the central budget might be insufficient for its needs. So far the funds necessary *to start operations* have not reached the coffers of the region. Members of the working class point to the fact that Romanian chauvinists in various ministries, particularly those working with Vasile Luca, did their best to prevent the social and economic development of the Szekler Land; they use as examples the comparatively poor supply of food, industrial goods and bank credits for this region, as well as the fact that roads are worse here than elsewhere.[6]

At the same time, however, ethnic Hungarians living outside the HAR received the news less enthusiastically than those inside it. This is notably the case of the Hungarian intelligentsia from Cluj, who were rather reserved towards HAR because they feared that Târgu Mureş could potentially become the new cultural center of ethnic Hungarians, thus eclipsing the historical role of Cluj as the cul-

tural capital city of Hungarians in Transylvanian. An August 1952 report of the Hungarian Embassy recorded Transylvania's Hungarian intellectuals' caution regarding the HAR: "We still have no idea what the HAR will be like. We still have little information about it and we should wait before issuing opinions." The same report notes that by contrast, in the Szekler Land, the news about the HAR "was received with chants of 'We are Hungarians again'; in many villages, people started wearing patches with Hungary's national colors."[7]

Yet the establishment of the HAR dashed many expectations. In the summer of 1952, many who had taken seriously the constitutional provision allowing HAR to draft its own statutes to be ratified by the Grand National Assembly were disappointed.

In administrative terms, the HAR's leadership was controlled by the Communist Party. During its first meeting, the HAR leadership was composed of eleven members, ten of whom were ethnic Hungarians. At the level of the Central Committee, the man in charge of HAR affairs was Alexandru Moghioroş, a hardliner on collectivization and anti-*chiabur* campaigns. Although the region enjoyed various forms of cultural freedom, such as a radio station, a literary journal and a faculty of medicine, all in the Hungarian language, it did not have social and economic autonomy, since the Hungarian leadership depended on Party material and political incentives, and was a loyal executor of directives sent by the Central Committee. As far as ethnic relations were concerned, the early HAR years were periodically marked by increased tensions. In September 1954, László Pataki, the Hungarian ambassador in Bucharest, wrote the following:

> Comrade György spoke during the intermission of a play in a Bucharest theater with the writer Kisbenke György, who shared some of his impressions during a recent trip to the HAR. In the towns and villages he visited, he learned of rumors that Transylvania would be annexed to Hungary at the USSR's demand. […] People seem excited by the rumor and seem to believe in it. The rumor seems to be particularly strong in the districts of Odorhei and Trei Scaune. […] As far as the measures taken by authorities are concerned, Kisbenke, his interlocutor, could not give an answer, but he added that in those districts not only common people but also functionaries hoped that the rumor would come true. In my opinion Kisbenke's account is plausible as I myself noted that there was a frequent anti-Romanian attitude in those lands… I think it would be very easy for reactionaries there to manipulate the masses, as party and state authorities are unable to dispel the rumors. Worse, in many cases they seem to reproduce them.[8]

Ambassador Pataki reported the following about the visit of "Comrade Szipka," a counselor of the Hungarian Embassy, to the HAR between the 25th and the 26th of September 1954:

> After talking to people in marketplaces and in other locations, comrade Szipka concluded that the Romanian-Hungarian relationship was quite tense. Reactionaries from Transylvania but also from Bucharest have spread rumors that Transylvania was to be annexed to Hungary. Consequently, in expectation of the Hungarian takeover, peasants, and especially Hungarian peasants, often refuse to hand over to the authorities the quotas they owe. This compels local authorities to take coercive measures, which, in turn, leads to general discontent. […]
>
> Many complain that the so-called voluntary taxes are demanded only in Transylvania and that officials resort to coercion in order to collect them. Any building under construction is said to be financed by the state from these taxes.[9]

During the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Hungarian cultural and political elites from Transylvania expressed their loyalty to the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP). Reports about the aftermath of the Hungarian riots in Romania are, nevertheless, colored by ideology. An entry in the log of the Hungarian Embassy in Bucharest from January 10, 1957, reads:

> Two or three days after October 23, the events in Hungary stirred emotions throughout the country. The masses were in discontent and showed admiration for the street fights in Hungary by talking about the heroic Hungarian nation. […] Party leaders and regular members also seemed to have been caught up in this wave of admiration. One minister went as far as to declare he would gladly fight on the side of the Hungarian people. Writers were enthusiastic, irrespective of their nationality. Radu Boureanu even wrote a poem in honor of the revolutionaries, extolling Ady and Petőfi's youth movement; the poem is widely circulated in universities. Students went beyond admiration and attempted to emulate their Hungarian colleagues. […] In response, the government rehired blacklisted employees, while planting "moles" in factories. […] In addition to signaling firmness, the government took measures to strengthen social security by increasing salaries and pensions and by reintroducing child allowances on October 29. These measures had important effects on the population. In many places voices were heard saying that the measures had been adopted under pressure from the events in Hungary. […] If we make an effort to contextualize their adoption, we agree that they were indeed adopted because of those events.[10]

One may indeed suspect that sympathy for the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was more intense in the HAR than in the rest of the country, yet there is little evidence to substantiate this assessment. Interview data and also written sources nevertheless show that peasants were convinced that the Hungarian Revolution was

caused by the repression against peasants as well as by the unbearable tax system. A peasant explicitly wrote in his diary in December 1956 that "Taxes were too high… That's why the rebellion started…"[11] It was in response to these fears that the requisition system was dismantled in early 1957 and the Party stepped up the removal of people from lists of *chiaburi*.

To calm things down, on December 15–16, 1956, Gheorghiu-Dej himself participated in the regional Party conference in the HAR and delivered a speech highlighting the role of Party unity. Concerning the behavior of Party leaders in the HAR during the Revolution, historian Stefano Bottoni argues that they passed the test of loyalty.[12] As for the Hungarian elites outside the HAR, notably those from Cluj and Oradea, they scorned the "revolutionary zeal" with which Hungarian elites from the HAR carried out the Party demands and sarcastically dubbed Târgu-Mureş, the HAR capital, "Little Moscow."

2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF THE ODORHEI DISTRICT

During the 1950s, the Odorhei district encompassed one city (Odorheiu Secuiesc) and 28 communes with 89 villages in total. In 1956, the district population numbered 81,668 inhabitants, of which about 14,500 lived in the city of Odorheiu Secuiesc. The ethnic distribution was as follows: 80,130 Hungarians, 1,108 Romanians, 237 Roma and a small number of Jews and Germans.[13] Until December 1952, the administrative organization remained that of the interwar period (counties and districts). The economic structure of Odorheiu Secuiesc rested on small industry. Beginning with the workshops of small tradesmen (such as carpenters and tailors), an industrial sector developed in the 1960s. Those in mountainous areas also worked in specific crafts suited to the local ecology, such as lime smelting, salt mining and furniture making. During collectivization, the city was less the economic center of the Odorhei basin than its political, commercial, and cultural center.

The communes were administrative units grouping several villages around a bigger, usually central, village. The total number of households during the thirteen years of collectivization ranged between 17,687 and 23,100; most of these owned arable land, pastures and orchards under 10 ha in size. In some villages (Vârghiş, Filiaş and Beteşti) in 1945, the state expropriated a number of great estates comprising more than 100 ha from heirs of the Hungarian gentry.

From a social perspective, status was the result of the amount of land one owned, and animal husbandry by those owning little fell at the bottom of the social status hierarchy. The denominational landscape was woven into complex patterns: the communes situated in the Harghita volcanic hills (Vlăhița, Căpâlnița, Zetea, Satu Mare, Brădeşti, Lueta and Lupeni) were Roman Catholic, whereas those stretching along the valleys of the Târnava Mare, Homorod and Varghiş

rivers were predominantly Reformed Protestant and Unitarian. In several cases, however, villages were split between Catholics and Protestants, notably in larger villages (such as Mereşti, Mărtiniş, Sânpaul and Crăciunel).

3. METHODS OF ORGANIZATION IN THE COLLECTIVIZATION CAMPAIGN

The collectivization campaign was launched in 1949 on the basis of interwar administrative units (counties, districts, towns and communes). Starting in May 1949, these administrative units were ruled by provisional committees whose members were elected from among the communists and their supporters. At the time, the Communist Party was weakly represented in the region and enjoyed little prestige. Thus, in January 1953, Party membership in the Mureş–Autonomous Region was but 2.9 percent of the population.[14] Also, the Party had no organizations in 77 of the region's 428 communes. Established in 1944, the Hungarian People's Union (HPU), which was the main political organization of ethnic Hungarians, soon came under pressure from the ethnic Hungarian communists.[15] The organization had come under the influence of the Party, but as collectivization began, it was becoming discredited because the Hungarian masses had deserted it in droves. Nevertheless, the HPU's village organizations engaged in an intense propaganda campaign for the cause of collectivization.[16] Concerning Party work in this period, a former first secretary for youth problems wrote: "In each village we had to set up a local party organization and once established, it had to be strengthened. As first secretary, I liked going out there in the field because I wanted to know what was happening."[17]

As in other regions of Romania, in 1949 the Party leadership was careful to observe legal provisions on the voluntary nature of collectivization. This situation was to change starting in 1950, when the pressure for collectivization intensified. Thus, between May and June 1949, county Party committees were given the job of proposing the establishment of collective farms.[18] According to instructions, the county committee wrote a synthesis of the favorable conditions for collectivizing certain places, submitting it to the Agriculture Department of the Party's Central Committee, which subsequently examined the situation in the field to approve or reject the proposed locations. Later, the right to approve the establishment of new collective farms was taken over by the regions' Party committees.

Using a method developed in 1951 in the Stalin region, the stages of the collectivization process were as follows: the district Party Committee summoned the heads of the district People's Councils, primary Party organizations, the police and educational institutions and analyzed with them the possibility of collectivizing in their localities. When the Party believed a village fulfilled the conditions for being collectivized, it would dispatch activists to investigate the situation there. At the next meeting of the District People's Council, the activists would share their field

observations, which the Council would use to decide which villages had the best prospects for collectivization. The activists would return to those villages to help the primary Party organization develop methods for persuading well-respected middle peasants join the collective farm and the so-called "initiative committee."[19] The actual course of collectivization rarely fit this organizational "ideal type" and, in practice, was usually adapted to local conditions. Says a former Party activist:

> During the agitprop campaign for collectivization we would send the entire district People's Council's personnel into villages. The secretary in charge of agricultural matters, as well as the one for cadres and other experts came to respond to people's problems. There, we would rarely do our persuasion work inside peasants' homes, because peasants would talk disrespectfully to us if they saw us on their property. We therefore would summon them to the buildings of the People's Council or, if the village had no People's Council, to the school, because there we were in control. We made them sit in the classroom and listen to long boring lectures and discuss propaganda brochures. Party chairmen of factories and of cadres were all at our disposal. We used as many of them as we needed, we organized them in agitprop teams. They did their job, they knew by heart what their duties were.[20]

Some of the district-level Party cadres involved had been trained by the Regional RWP Politburo and were handsomely paid. One respondent recalled: "I became a Party activist in 1951. I was well paid. In '52 I was making 950 lei, plus 25 lei per diem. The per diem was enough for one to eat well, so I managed to save the entire wage."[21] As to their reasons for adhering to the new ideology, the same respondent indicated that "Some joined because they were sincerely committed, others for personal interest, others to survive. For example, the church cantor would teach revolutionary songs to young people."

The priorities of the campaign were unevenly distributed across different social strata. One respondent noted that:

> We worked a lot with the village youth, seeing them as means to persuade their parents. We worked hard to defame the old order and praise the new one in the eyes of this youth having great receptivity, no past, and no history. We stuffed their brains, but with little success. We went all over the district.[22]

Sometimes, Party activists had to do persuasion work in their own families: "I had to explain things to my father ten times. He had two sons who were Party activists and he still wouldn't sign up. Once my brother and I took a bottle of wine, went home and started explaining all over again."[23]

The first collective farms in the Odorhei district were inaugurated on June 4,

1950 in Vârghiş (Vargyas), Mugeni (Bögöz) and Cristuru Secuiesc (Székelykeresztúr). Only a few villagers joined. Out of the 4,100 inhabitants of Cristuru Secuiesc, for example, only 43 families, owning barely 133 ha of land, finally joined GAC "New Furrow." Likewise, out of Mugeni's 1,200 inhabitants, only 61 families owning 166 ha joined the GAC "Struggle for Peace."[24] What these villages had in common were exceptionally favorable economic and legal conditions. Thus, in Vârghiş, a local landlord who owned a great deal of land had been already expropriated and his family evacuated from the estate by the time collectivization began. Similarly, in Cristuru Secuiesc, a village with some of the most fertile soil in the entire district and a large number of middle-peasants, many *chiabur* properties had been also expropriated. Mugeni was also a thriving village, as its peasants ranked among the richest in the district during the interwar years; they produced, packed and sold dairy products in big cities, including Bucharest.

In June 1950, Alexandru Moghioroş took over the leadership of the agricultural sector, and the collectivization campaign throughout the country intensified. In the southwest corner of Odorhei district, between mid-June and mid-July 1950, six more GACs were established: Filiaş (Fiatfalva),[25] Porumbenii Mari (Nagygalambfalva), Şoimoşul Mic (Kissolymos), Rugăneşti (Rogonfalva), Mujna (Muszna) and Turdeni (Tordátfalva). Membership, however, was low.[26] Porumbenii Mari had 1,470 inhabitants and only 32 joined GAC "Red Flag," with 104 ha of land. Similarly, of Şoimoşul Mic's 1,100 inhabitants, only 67 joined the "New Life" GAC, with 393 ha of land; in Rugăneşti 50 people joined the "Red Star" GAC, of a total of 800 inhabitants; finally, in Mujna, only 38 people joined GAC "Forward," of a total of 910. To maximize the propaganda effects, inauguration ceremonies were organized for several GACs on the same day: June 4, 1950 for three GACs, and July 9, 1950 for the remaining four. By the end of the year, nine more GACs were inaugurated, a poor record as compared to the authorities' objective of establishing 24 GACs during June alone.[27]

As collectivization intensified all over the country, in the second half of 1950 the use of force against peasants became frequent, leading to mass resistance. As a consequence, by the fall of the same year, the Party decided to relax collectivization procedures and to invest in the consolidation of existing GACs. In Odorhei, the collectivization propaganda was slowed down as the Party turned its attention to organizing elections for People's Councils and implementing the recently announced, Soviet-inspired administrative reform that set up regions and districts according to the Soviet model. Although no collectives were formed in Odorhei during 1951, the process was resumed with renewed vigor in the spring of 1952. By early 1953, a total of twenty new GACs had been organized in the district. As in its initial strategy, the Party continued to collectivize a few wealthy villages first in each subregion as a demonstration. These were Sânpaul (Homoródszentpál), Rareş (Recsenyéd), and Daia (Dálya) in the Homorod Valley, and Tălişoara (Olasztelek), Brăduţi (Bardoc), Avrămeşti (Szentábrahám) and Medişor (Medesér) in the Baraolt area. The campaign benefited from the ide-

ological and organizational zeal of local People's Council members: the local presidents and secretaries gave way to outsiders, most of whom had a working class background. This was part of a nationwide effort, and the Party managed to appoint over eight thousand industrial workers judged to have a "high class consciousness" to sit as chairmen and secretaries of rural people's councils.[28] Says one respondent:

> We were not informed about it. A car drove in one day bringing the new chairman and secretary. We were told that those two men were in charge from that day on. They changed all local leaders, throughout the region. The Party was unhappy with local leaders and was willing to experiment with cadres of working class origin and see if they were better at obeying Party resolutions. Local leaders who lost their jobs were not even criticized or sanctioned. They were simply told that they were no longer in charge.[29]

During the following years, the pace of collectivization slowed down yet again. Only two GACs were founded by March 1955, and then nothing happened until 1959. Overall, the GACs established in the early 1950s were plagued by strikes, emigration and even violence. According to one respondent,

> In '53 or '54 peasants rioted in Porumbenii Mari. We filled a truck with Party members and drove there to deal with them. The Securitate also came, its officers dressed in civilian clothes, along with loads of informers. After the Porumbeni Mari riot, people in Tălişoara rioted too. Children were dismissed from school and students from universities. The operation was the toughest in the Ciuc district. We were delegates there too, after we had finished propaganda work here. Those people simply could not stand communism. By contrast, those in the Gheorgheni district proved to be more submissive.[30]

Resistance also came in the form of protests. In Mugeni, GAC members protested against the low wages by sending a petition to the district authorities, in which they demanded raises and the right to a pension. The district leadership replied by excluding them from the GAC, by allotting them low-quality land away from the village and even by imprisoning some of them.[31]

In 1956, a new administrative reform transferred a part of the Odorhei district to the Cristur district. In total, Odorhei lost seven collectivized villages so that by the spring of 1959, only 13 GACs were still operating. Meanwhile, faced with peasant resistance, the local Odorhei Party organization contented itself with establishing TOZ farms, which the Party described as "inferior forms of cooperation based on the free association of peasants,"[32] and in which members retained private property rights to their tools, animals and land. The evolution and overall distribution of all forms of socialist farming in the Odorhei district are presented in the table below:

TABLE 1: *Distribution of socialist farms in Odorhei district (1950–1960)*

Year	GAS	SMT	GAC	TOZ	Associations	Collective sheep farms
1950	1	1	6	—	—	—
1951	1	1	6	—	—	—
1952	1	1	1	—	—	—
1953	1	1	11	8	6	12
1954	1	1	11	9	14	8
1955	1	1	12	13	32	16
1956	1	1	12	21	28	9
1957	1	1	12	40	—	—
1958	1	1	13	76	—	5
1959	1	1	19	73	—	2
1960	1	1	22	70	—	2

Source: Direcția generală de statistică. Caietul statistic al raionului Odorhei, 1967, Arhiva Direcției Județene de Statistică Harghita, 39.

By 1960 only 25 percent of Odorhei district villages were successfully collectivized, and the RWP District Committee realized that its plan to collective 24 villages was woefully behind schedule. Despite the fact that there were only 13 collective farms in the district at the beginning of the year, the regional newspaper *Vörös Zászló* [*Red Flag*] announced on April 16, 1959 that the district was fully collectivized. Beginning in 1959, the Party began turning TOZs into GACs, but of the district's 16,238 farming households, only 6,857 had joined GACs by mid-1960. The situation changed only after the 3rd Party Congress (June 1960), when the rhythm of collectivization in the district picked up: 29 new GACs were inaugurated in Odorhei by December 1961. According to the final numbers, collectivization in Odorhei was declared complete on February 25, 1962, when 15,344 families owning 61,900 hectares of land joined GACs.[33] Very few villages remained uncollectivized: among them were Satu Mare, Căpâlnița and Vlăhița, all located in mountainous areas of the district.

At the level of the HAR, the main stages of collectivization were fairly similar, as evidenced below in Table 2:

TABLE 2: *Distribution of socialist farms in HAR* (1950–1959)

Type of unit	1950	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
SMT	4	7	8	8	8	8
GAS	6	6	7	7	13	14
GAC	81	125	125	128	132	142
Associations	—	—	—	2	2	1
TOZ	—	135	199	301	515	623

Source: Anuarul Statistic al Regiunii Autonome Maghiare, 1960, 7.

The evolution of the collectivization process in the district is also reflected by changes in the forms of landed property:

TABLE 3: *Distribution of property forms in HAR (1948–1960)*

Year	Arable land (hectares)	In GACs	In TOZs	In family farms
1948	101,182	—	—	107,200
1952	102,565	6,973	568	95,024
1956	106,078	8,428	1,348	96,292
1958	104,185	1,073	1,826	101,286
1960	105,425	13,625	36,223	55,577

Source: Direcția generală de statistică, Caietul statistic al raionului Odorhei, 1967, Arhiva Direcției Județene de Statistică Harghita, 15.

4. MANIPULATING CLASS DIFFERENCES: MAKING *CHIABURI* IN ODORHEI

According to evidence from 1950, there were 468 households of *chiaburi* in Odorhei district. Two years later, the number grew to 683, that is, roughly 4 percent of all peasant households—a significant percentage as compared to the national average of 2.5 percent.[34] The labeling and unlabeling of *chiaburi* was conducted by village, district and regional commissions in accordance with Party directives. On March 27, 1951, the executive committee of the People's Council of the Stalin Region issued a resolution stipulating the following:

> With the approval of the RWP Regional Committee, the following commissions will be established:
>
> The Regional commission, made up of one comrade from the RWP regional leadership in the person of Regional executive Pop Iosif (who is also to serve as chair) as well as the chief of the Regional Agriculture Department.
>
> The District Commissions, made up of one comrade from the RWP district leadership, who will be chair, together with a representative of the Executive Committee of the District People's Council and the chief of the District Agriculture Department.
>
> The commune-level commissions, made up of the local Party secretary and the Executive Committee of the communal People's Council.[35]

The work of *chiaburization* was a lengthy process in which commune-level commissions would propose names to the Executive Committee of the District People's Council. Their evaluations would be then sent to the regional commission, which sent the results back down. The Executive Committee of the District People's Council frequently criticized commune and district commissions for various errors. However, the source of errors was complex and rooted in at least two factors: the absence of specific criteria for defining a "*chiabur*,"[36] and the frequent shifts in central policy for the agricultural sector, often as a result of high-level power struggles. Thus, the critique aimed at district and commune commissions by the District People's Council in the summer of 1953 announced a period of diminished coercion:

> Many comrades from the district and commune People's Councils have committed errors in *chiaburization* by labeling as *chiaburi* a number of working and middle peasants, thereby pushing honest citizens into the arms of enemies. Our Party, our government, and our working class do not need to declare honest citizens enemies of the people. Despite warnings, these comrades do not heed our criticism of their practices in this most important matter. District committees have been so superficial in their work that many honest middle peasants and even poor peasants were labeled *chiaburi*, which may compromise our people's democracy. Moreover, the replies issued by the district-level comrades to our criticism have always arrived late.[37]

Confusion in the criteria for labeling *chiaburi* and constant changes in agrarian policy therefore led to numerous campaigns of *chiaburizing* and *unchiaburizing*. The lists were never considered complete.

5. THE STATUS OF THE *CHIABURI* IN THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Labeling some peasants *chiaburi* was usually initiated at local levels, by the members of the Party organization or the administration. The policy of "isolating and containing" the *kulaks* had two main kinds of effects on the village community. The first effect was public display of community solidarity and sympathy with the *chiaburi*. Often neighbors or kin would help *chiaburi* pay their quotas, would sow their fields for them or would hide food for them. Here is the recollection of a respondent who had been classified as *chiabur* during those years:

> They took me to the People's Council and threw me into a cellar, then gave me and my family a two-day deadline to finish sowing six hectares of land by ourselves. Thirty-two plows immediately came onto my fields and helped me finish; they brought seed as well. The next evening, when the chairman came to check on things, the job was done. This is how I avoided big trouble.[38]

Another peasant shared a similar story with the author:

> My potato requisition quota was one ton, but the harvest was only half of that. My father was summoned to the People's Council and the chairman yelled at him that if he failed to deliver the full quota he would be deported and never again see the light of day. I don't know who was there and overheard, but soon, people in the village gathered the missing half-ton of potatoes and those who had horses took them to Odorhei for free.[39]

The region witnessed not only economic but also cultural forms of solidarity. Thus, when *chiabur* offspring were thrown out of the village center, where they were celebrating with other young men and women during the winter holidays, most of the other youth present also left the room in sign of solidarity.

The second kind of reaction to the naming of *chiaburi* was hostility, typically shown by Party activists loyal to those in power, as well as by peasants who had become true believers in the egalitarian communist ideology. Hostility often manifested itself in "unmasking" *chiabur* "schemes," and in following these processes with interest. An official report states:

> With regard to the transfer of property belonging to the aforementioned *chiaburi*, we would like to report that, in actuality, these *chiaburi* were chased away by local villagers, their estates were confiscated and their houses were turned into GAC headquarters.[40]

There were cases, however, in which commune-level commission members failed to follow the letter of the law and were reluctant to harm their fellow villagers by

persecuting them. In Ocland, for example, the members of the local commission failed to provide evidence concerning those to be named *chiaburi,* as we see in a June 30, 1952 memo signed by the commission chairman and secretary:

> To the Chairman of the District People's Committee:
>
> We hereby attach reports about the people proposed as *chiaburi,* specifying that none of the commission members gave declarations on the matter, they only made proposals but they didn't have the courage to take a position. That is why the report is late.[41]

A casual survey of *chiabur* lists from the first half of the 1950s shows that most *chiaburi* lived in collectivized villages. For example, a *chiabur* list from the summer of 1951 recorded tens of *chiaburi* in such villages: 10 in Avrămeşti, 14 in Cristuru Secuiesc, 15 in Filiaş, 16 in Medişor, 9 in Porumbenii Mari and 7 in Rugăneşti. When repression increased in 1952, the number of *chiaburi* also grew: 21 in Avrămeşti, 21 in Filiaş, 23 in Medişor, 19 in Porumbenii Mari, 21 in Mugeni, 22 in Rugăneşti, 28 in Cristuru Secuiesc, 24 in Sânpaul and 11 in Turdeni.

In Rugăneşti, Filiaş, Avrămeşti, Daia, Sânpaul and Mujna, the first GACs were founded on the land owned by *chiaburi* resettled or deported for forced labor at the Danube–Black Sea canal. In Filiaş, for example, the People's Council reported that the property of the *chiaburi* Francisc Fazakas and Carol Fazakas "was seized by the authorities and transferred to the Filias GAC, for which the houses had already been made the GAC headquarters when the GAC had been founded in 1950."[42]

According to the 1956 census, there were a total of 17,687 peasant households. This is an unusually large number relative to the district's total population of 81,000 people, 14,000 of which were city residents. The data indicates that the average number of persons per family was 2.6, a very low figure considering that in peasant families the first signs of birth rate decreases began in the late 1950s.[43] The explanation for this paradoxical situation can be found in the practice of peasant families to divide their property among several generations in order to owe smaller quotas. Overall, in 1950 the Odorhei district had 468 *chiabur* households; during 1951 and early 1952, 116 households were crossed off this list. To the remaining 352 *chiaburi* five new ones were added.

Between May and June 1952, district authorities undertook a vast operation of labeling "old *chiaburi*" and "new *chiaburi*," a distinction first made in official documents on June 16, 1950. This action is closely tied to an intensified collectivization campaign and changes in *chiaburization* policy under the direct control of Alexander Moghioroş, following the purge of Ana Pauker from the party leadership. Thus, in the summer of 1952, the Party launched a full-fledged "*chiabur* hunt" and demanded enforcement of the requisition system "down to the bone."[44] In Odorhei district, the campaign began with identifying *chiaburi* in collectivized villages, with the goal of "unmasking" those who had infiltrated col-

lective farms. At the village level, the campaign was carried out by special village commissions made up of the secretary of the Party village organization, the chairman of the People's Council and ordinary Party members.

The first reviews took place in late May. By July 1, 1952, in Rugăneşti, Mugeni, Cristuru Secuiesc, Porumbenii Mari, Sânpaul, Daia, Medişor and Turdeni, 65 *chiaburi* were excluded from GACs. Following Party instructions, commune-level commissions drafted a number of reports in July with "proposals for declaring *chiaburi*," and sent them on up to the district and the regional People's Council. The work proceeded as follows: on June 7, 31 "proposals, together with the necessary reports, for declaring *chiaburi*";[45] on June 12, 45 proposals annexed to "the original reports drawn up by the communal commissions"; on June 26, 33 proposals; on June 30, 64 reports by a special commission and on the same day, 78 proposals from a special commission of the district.[46] The new lists of *chiaburi* were approved by the Executive Committee of the Regional People's Council. On June 18, the district Executive Committee sent the Finance Department 67 new proposals, so they could "register them for the purpose of altering both their quotas and their taxes."[47] On June 20, 1952, a new list sent from the region to the district People's Council names 63 new *chiaburi*, 17 of which were excluded from their GACs. The most complete list for 1952 indicates a total of 683 *chiaburi*.

The commissions that verified these lists were to characterize not just the economic status and social origin of those named, but also their attitude toward "the popular democratic regime." This left the door wide open for subjective interpretation and caused much tension in interpersonal relations. In the interpretation of commission members, characterizing these attitudes mostly amounted to stating their position on the organization and founding of the GAC, as well as their relations with Party activists and local organizers. Many villagers received the label of *chiabur* as a direct function of these personal relationships. Later, when people were being removed from these lists, it became evident that people were often made *chiaburi* from personal vengeance.

Peasant families branded as "*chiaburi*" did everything possible to avoid the label. They submitted written protests demanding that their status be changed. This was particularly the case when collectivization was stagnant or declining, and peasants assaulted the authorities with contestations. For example, around election time in 1953, after many peasants had been released from prison, *chiaburi* from the HAR filed hundreds of petitions. In 1953, around election time, when many peasants were released from prison, *chiaburi* from the HAR filed hundreds of such applications. On March 23, 1953, the District-level Party Committee reviewed 125 such requests at the district People's Council. Initially, these requests had been sent to three levels of authority: the Central Committee in Bucharest, and the Regional and District People's Councils. It is noteworthy that 70 of the 125 plaintiffs had bypassed the District-level Party Committee, sending their complaints to the HAR People's Council (48) or to the Central Committee (22). Both these levels re-sent them to the district level, where 49 petitions were favorably solved and the rest rejected.[48] On January 29, 1953, the district People's Council

reviewed 13 petitions. 10 were sent to the regional level, and the other three to the Central Committee; after verifying them, nine were rejected and four persons taken off the lists. Here is the situation reported on different dates: on March 15, 1953, the district committee reviewed 32 applications and approved nine; on April 1, 1953, half of the 24 petitions that had been filed were approved, and of the 19 petitions reviewed on April 27, 1953, six were approved while the committee ordered further investigations into four of them. Similarly, on May 5, 1953, the committee reviewed 24 more petitions, approved seven of them and requested further investigations for four.

Given the lack of objective criteria for naming *chiaburi*, verifications were difficult to perform. In early June, 1953, the HAR "Commission for the Investigation of *Chiaburi*" concluded the following:

> District commissions tend to show superficiality in reviewing *dechiaburization* petitions. Commission members are often absent from commission proceedings, solutions are given without due consideration of the Regional Commission's instructions and of the reality in the field. Decisions are often not supported by any evidence. Many times, the blacklisting resolutions themselves are flawed. For example, although peasants were faulted for having used hired labor, the commission did not indicate the names of the employees, the period of employment or how many family members also worked on the farm. In other cases, when commissions drafted land inventories, they did not indicate how much was arable and how much was used for pastures and orchards. Similarly, no mention was made of the quality of land. These kinds of flaws prevent the Regional Commission from doing this very important work and force it to send the files back to the district committee.
>
> District commissions do not take minutes of their meetings concerning how decisions were reached, and they fail to give the names of committee members and how the petitions were resolved. We remind you that these reports must be done as soon as possible, according to the instructions from the regional committees.
>
> You are hereby warned that the district-level commission chairman is personally responsible for any failures before the HAR Executive Committee.
>
> Signed: Bob Ioan, Chairman of the Regional Commission and Vice President of the HAR Executive Committee.[49]

On June 12, 1953, the Regional Commission reviewed *dechiaburization* petitions filed by peasants from the Odorhei district[50] and decided that 329 of the 508 petitions should be rejected.[51] At the same time, the Regional Commission approved the request of the district-level Commission to *chiaburize* another 29 peasants, six

of them from the collectivized village of Filiaş.[52] The Commission also created a new social category: ex-*chiaburi* "with files," that is, peasants who had been removed from the category but who were to be kept under surveillance (16 people were to be considered ex-*chiaburi*).[53] Another new category was that of *chiaburi* (11 of them)[54] about whom the regional and district commissions disagreed. At this meeting, 139 of 508 *chiaburi* were removed from the lists.

Several excerpts from the meeting on the reasons for expulsions from the GAC are suggestive: "He was expelled due to his attitude towards our regime"; "He tried to convince others not to join the GAC and is under the influence of the clergy"; "He exploited the working peasantry"; "He showed inimical feelings towards the regime and engaged in speculation"; "Until 1947 he had servants and exploited them. He is expelled for being an exploiter"; "He was involved in black market activities"; "He was expelled from GAC because he was an exploiter and has *chiabur* relatives"; "He was expelled for being a class enemy"; "He rented out land and showed enmity towards the people's democracy"; "He worked his land with farmhands, as he was a carpenter and had no time for farming."[55] These were typical responses to the basic indicators for identifying *chiaburi*, which the Party's Organizational Bureau established in 1952.

In the Odorhei district, *dechiaburizations* of larger scale than those in 1953 occurred only after the Hungarian revolution, in the winter and spring of 1957. At the end of 1956 there were 644 *chiaburi*, but by the end of March 1957, their numbers had dropped to 203 following numerous contestations. Also in this period, people who had been excluded from the GAC for their supposed *chiabur* status were allowed to rejoin.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Collectivization unfolded in the Odorhei district between June 4, 1950 and February 25, 1962, at a pace that decreased with periods of political relaxation and increased in periods of political tension correlated with similar trends at national level. When, for various reasons, the pressure from the center was eased, collectivization processes carried out by lower levels of political power saw stagnation, albeit with brief time lags.

During its first stage, most communes and villages were able to oppose coercion and resisted the propaganda assault, facilitated by the Party's weak presence in villages. In the second stage, which began in 1958 across the country and in 1960 in Odorhei, the rhythm of collectivizing increased. Exhausted economically and psychologically by the effects of a decade of struggling against a coercive state, the peasants gave in. By the spring of 1962, the Odorhei district was fully collectivized, with the exception of a few mountain villages.

The data from this period make it clear that ethnicity was not an important variable in these campaigns, as Party activists and State officials were all Hungarian, persuasion campaigns were conducted in Hungarian, as were written prop-

aganda materials. Historian László Márton reached the same conclusion in his comparative work on Romanian and Hungarian villages in the Mureş district.[56] The Hungarian elite of the HAR implemented Party instructions faithfully not only in the collectivization campaigns, but also in the areas of educational and cultural policies. For example, at the Regional Party Conference of January 6–7, 1962, Hungarian Party cadres requested that Romanian-speaking sections be set up at the Târgu Mureş Medical School and a Romanian-language section created at the Târgu Mureş Theater. One can therefore conclude that the HAR's elites construed its formal autonomy as a means to express Party loyalty, and not to defend the social and ethnic interests of their subordinates.

Translated from Romanian by Cornel Ban and Katherine Verdery

NOTES

1 This is valid for Romanian as well as for Hungarian historians from Transylvania or from Hungary proper. The only partial exception is the Hungarian historian Vincze Gábor, who wrote extensively on the political history of Hungarians after World War II but did not explore social transformations.
2 In *Kuláksors* (Miercurea-Ciuc: Status, 1999), the editor Tibor Kristó recorded the memories of 41 persons affected by collectivization.
3 The participants are historians and anthropologists: Gagyi József, Stefano Bottoni, László Márton, Lázok Klára, Kápolnási Zsolt, Novák Zoltán, Oláh Sándor, Olti Ágoston, and Vincze Gábor. The results of their study are forthcoming with Pro Print publishing house in Miercurea-Ciuc.
4 Oláh Sándor, *Csendes csatatér. Kollektivizálás és stratégiák a két Homoród mentén (1949–1962)* (Miercurea-Ciuc: Pro Print, 2001).
5 *Anuarul statistic al RPR, Direcția Centrală de Statistică* (Bucharest, 1959), 70–73.
6 MOL (Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian State Archives]) XIX-J-33-a-198/sz. b./1952.35. The documents indicated in footnotes 6–10 were provided to the author by historian Vincze Gábor.
7 MOL XIX-J-33-a-198/sz.b./1952, 34.
8 MOL XIX-J-1-j-Rom-5/a-001533–1954, 37.
9 MOL XIX-J-1-j-Rom-5/a-001533–1954, 38.
10 MOL XIX-J-1-j-Rom-4/j.00248–1957./.6.d.
11 Manuscript diary of A.P. (1914–1999), Mereşti, Odorhei raion. The file is in my possession.
12 Stefano Bottoni, public lecture, László Teleki Institute, Budapest, 18–19 September 2003.
13 *Anuarul Statistic al Regiunii Autonome Maghiare, Direcția Regională de Statistică a RAM* (Bucharest, 1960), 40–41.
14 Stefano Bottoni, *A sztálini "kis Magyarország:" A Magyar Autonóm Tartomány megalakítása*. Manuscript, 2003.
15 The communists' attacks against the HPU began with an article authored by Vasile Luca in the Cluj daily *Igazság* (Justice) on May 22, 1947. The article was titled "Ori-

entations of Hungarians from Romania" and inveighed against the "unprincipled" unity of Hungarians, allegedly advocated by the HPU.

16 That the HPU conducted massive propaganda for collectivization is evident from its archival documents as well as from its weekly *Falvak Dolgozó Népe*.

17 Interview B.Gy., 83 years old, ex-RWP activist, Odorheiu Secuiesc, March 12, 2003.

18 Dan Cătănuş and Octavian Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România: Dimensiunea politică,* vol. 1: *1949–1953* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 171.

19 See László Márton, *A kollektivizálás Székelyudvarhely rajonban* (Hargita: Kalendárium, 2003).

20 B.Gy. March 12, 2003.

21 B.Gy. March 12, 2003.

22 B.Gy. March 12, 2003.

23 B.Gy. March 12, 2003.

24 *Szabadság*, June 10, 1950.

25 Interview D.D. 78 years old, Filiaş, March 29, 2003.

26 Árpád E. Varga, *Erdély etnikai és felekezeti statisztikája. Kovászna, Hargita és Maros megye. Népszámlálási adatok 1850–1992 között* (Miercurea-Ciuc: Pro Print, 1998).

27 Robert Levy, *Gloria şi decăderea Anei Pauker* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2002), 89.

28 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România*, 46.

29 Interview R.D. 79 years old, male, former member of the Executive Committee of the Mereşti People's Council, Mereşti, April 21, 2003.

30 Interview B.Gy. March 12, 2003.

31 Interview K.J., 63 years old, male, retired teacher, Mugeni, July 10, 2001.

32 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România*, 247.

33 Zsolt Kápolnási, "Kollektivizálás Udvarhely rajonban a Vörös Zászló napilap tükrében (1952–1962)," *Areopolis, Revistă istorică şi de ştiinţe sociale*, III (2003), 262.

34 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România*, 29.

35 Arhiva Raionului Odorhei (ARO), 1950, "Listele chiaburilor. Secretariat. Anul 1950," no. inv. 99, 25.

36 Levy, *Gloria şi decăderea Anei Pauker*, 99.

37 ARO, "Actele secrete pentru anul 1953. Secretariat. Anul 1953," no. inv. 56, 68–69.

38 B.A., 79 years old, male, former *chiabur*, Satul Nou, November 13, 2002.

39 Diary of F.D., male, *chiabur* son, Ocland commune, Odorhei raion. A part of the diary was published in Kristó, ed., *Kuláksors*, 63–70.

40 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. inv. 39, 102.

41 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. inv. 39, f. 41.

42 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. inv. 39, f. 101.

43 Melinda Cândea and George Erdeli, "Satul românesc şi populaţia rurală," *Calitatea vieţii. Revistă de politici sociale*, (1995) 3–4, 261–268.

44 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România*, 31.

45 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. 39, 39.

46 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. 39, 165.

47 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. 39, 169.

48 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. 39, 291–293.

49 ARO, "Actele secrete pentru anul 1953. Secretariat. Anul 1953," no 56, 68–69.

50 ARO, file 1952–1953, no 39, 231.

51 "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953. Secretariat," no. 39, 233.
52 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. 39. 238.
53 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. 39, 239.
54 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. 39, 240.
55 ARO, "Dosar cu problemele chiaburilor. 1952–1953 Secretariat," no. 39, 240.
56 See László Márton, *A kollektivizálás Székelyudvarhely rajonban* (Hargita: Kalendárium, 2003).

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Collectivization and Resistance in the Shepherding Village of Poiana Sibiului (Sibiu Region)

MICHAEL STEWART
RĂZVAN STAN

"Land enslaves man. That's poverty."

Răzvan Stan, interview with V.I., 83 years old, former sheepowner, May 6, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.

The village that is the focus of this paper, Poiana Sibiului, has been known the length and breadth of Romania for at least two decades, if not longer. This is because of their sale of cheese in markets across the country, and perhaps in part due to extremely wide scale of the transhumance practiced by its inhabitants, but above all its fame results from the fabled wealth of its inhabitants.

In the 1980s, amusing stories circulated about Poienari who wanted to install lifts in their homes, or who had converted their stables into diesel stores at a time when the rest of the country could barely find enough gasoline to drive around their neighborhood. One concerned a shepherd who had asked the permission of the authorities to purchase a helicopter for a better surveillance of his flocks (the pretext was that he had the collective farms flocks in his care). The story goes that when the regional authorities in Sibiu turned down the request, the shepherds submitted it to President Ceauşescu. These stories were being spread at a time when Romanians, especially those in urban areas, were living at the edge of subsistence. Asking for a private helicopter in a country where even buying a new car was a near impossibility (and where the authorities were obsessed with controlling all the means likely to facilitate escape over the border) was a complete absurdity.

Whether these tales were genuinely believed or not—and one has to remember that there was no free press or investigative journalism of any sort in Romania at that time, so rumors had a life of their own—they demonstrate the boldness of the shepherds of Poiana. This paper tries to explain the remarkable achievement of these men and women who effectively resisted many of collectivization's most debilitating effects.

Other articles in this volume examine villages, communities and regions where the collectivization process was completed by 1962. Before 1962, in the hill region village of Ieud (see Kligman's chapter in this volume), even those who had been labeled as *chiaburi* (or exploiters) had abandoned resistance and submitted appli-

cations to join the Cooperatives of Agricultural Production (CAP)—as had nearly everyone else in the village. The village that is the object of this case study has an entirely different history, at least if the reader accepts this account. Although some of the villagers became involved in various segments of the socialist economy and found their own ways to adapt to the new structures, the terms of their adaptation were fundamentally different than those of other villagers in Romania. The negotiation process identified as the core of the practice of introducing and removing names from the list of *chiaburi* (see Lăţea's article in this volume) existed in Poiana as well. However, the process operated in a very different manner there. Although we are not prepared to advance a conclusive explanation as to the uniqueness of this case, comparative data suggests the types of factors favoring the prosperity of this area, in spite of communist domination. What we argue, however, is that in order to understand what went on in this region, we need to dispose of a misconception about the nature of state policy in general. This is a topic to which we will return in the conclusion.

1. THE POIANA SIBIULUI COMMUNITY AND THE CONTEXT OF THE MĂRGINIMEA SIBIULUI: HISTORICAL, ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The village of Poiana Sibiului is located in the southern part of the Transylvanian Plateau. It lies at the foot of the Cindrel Mountains, at an elevation of 900 meters. Poiana Sibiului was formed some centuries ago as a colony of the lowland village Dobârca, which played a defensive role on the southern border of the Transylvania province. The area of *Mărginimea Sibiului* (The Marginal Lands of Sibiu), which lies in central Romania, is in effect a strip of land connecting the high mountains of the south with the lowland to the north. The villages that developed on this narrow strip of land are linked by a network of roads, and have open access to both sides: northwards to the lowland depressions and the Transylvanian Plateau, and southwards, over the mountains, to the historical principality Walachia. This privileged position had provided many advantages for the villages, and continued to do so during the period under consideration here.

The particular history of settlement and land rights of each village in this area differs. These histories continue to profoundly influence the way their populations integrate into the various social formations of the 20th century, including the collective farms. Let me make a number of points in succession:

- *Geographic factors* have profoundly influenced the lifestyle of the area's population. For hundreds of years, the area has connected Transylvania and Walachia. The connection became even more intense due to the extensive pastoralism, or the transhumance.

- The *social and political situation* favored the local population, as they were free to move from one place to another (the area was under the "*fundus regius*" act, and the men of the border villages were in the military service of the empire).
- The *social structure* had a particular evolution in the area, as social classes typical in feudal systems were absent. The social and political privileges allowed the communities to resist external pressures and preserve more egalitarian social relations and practices.
- *The development of the villages* from scattered settlements at high altitudes in the feudal period, towards lower, centralized villages on naturally terraced hills meant that the settlements at high altitude (wooden cottages, or *colibi*) have continued to function as a parallel village just beyond the main villages.

Pastoralism had always been the spine of the local economy. The development of transhumant pastoralism was favored by a series of internal factors, such as the demand for wool for the fulling mills, and external factors, such as the facilities granted for shepherds in Wallachia. Trade was ever-present, and was directly related to pastoral activities. The shepherds needed a market for their produce. Transhumance took them all over the country and beyond, and they used this opportunity to sell other products as well.[1] Ambulant trade (or peddling) flourished immediately after the "customs war" (1886–1891), when Austria banned the import of all goods from Romania.

The fundamental feature determining the nature of husbandry in Poiana is the absence of village land. The documents of the Local Council show that, in 1952, the declared number of sheep exceeded 40,000 and the pasture land owned by the commune could provide food for only 10 percent of the sheep.[2] In 1957, out of the 4,076 ha of total surface land, only 2.2 percent was agricultural land. 63.9 percent was pasture and hay, and the rest consisted of highlands, forests and unproductive land.

TABLE 1. *Land distribution in 1957*

Total	Agricultural land	Haying land	Orchards	Highland and forests	Pastures	Unproductive land
4.076 ha	89	415	121	1.189	2.187	75
	2.2 %	10.2%	2.9%	29.2%	53.7%	1.8%

Source: Cornel Irimie, Nicolae Dunăre and Paul Petrescu, eds. *Mărginenii Sibiului* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1985), 178. See table in notes for longitudinal comparison.

Enduring ecological and economic factors (insufficient land of poor quality, the dispersion of the plots and the cold climate) caused an annual, pendulum-like movement of the shepherds for as long as we have records. Transhumance took them to Banat, Bărăgan, Dobrogea and the Danube Delta. Unlike most of the lowland villages that can be treated as well-established territorial entities, the "community" of villagers in Poiana Sibiului can best be described as an aggregate of mobile networks dispersed all over the country. Local people refer to the Poiana Sibiului as a "wandering village" (*sat ducător*). Although the villagers belong to the local community both administratively and culturally, their occupation makes them independent of the restricted territory of their commune. This was to have profound implications for the attempt at collectivization. There have been times when transhumance was restricted, such as when new ownership patterns hindered access to pasture after the 1921 agrarian reform.

In order to understand the impact of collectivization and the way new institutions interacted with existing social structures, it is necessary to provide some background on the different types of farms and the impact of the occupational specializations found in the region of study.

There seems to have always been precise distinctions between shepherds, both socially and economically. The clearest distinction, which also reflected the social status, was made between the sheep owners (*oieri*) and the shepherds (*ciobani*). The owners did not work with the sheep directly—that was the job of the shepherds. Instead, the owners were busy making deals, buying and selling, making investments, etc. While authors writing during the communist period tried to define big, middle and small shepherds,[3] the truth is that the application of the Leninist "peasant class model" is wholly inappropriate, especially at the lower end of the scale. Irimie talks of small owners having 10–60 sheep, but a flock exceeding 100 sheep needed two shepherds, one to lead, and the second to see that none of the sheep get left behind. This technique would have been (and still is) optional in the plains, but it was compulsory in the mountains and hilly areas where the general lay of the land makes it easy to loose sheep within a matter of seconds. This meant that even "small middle" owners were often employers of labor. Furthermore, in Mărginimea Sibiului, sheep breeding was oriented towards dairy production. This meant that within a flock, milking sheep had to be separated from lambs and rams. Milk processing was handled by specialists. According to the shepherds, in summertime, a flock of 150–200 sheep requires at least five people. Two people herd the milking sheep, two herd the lambs, rams and barren sheep, and one person processes the milk. This type of management requires more "personnel" than could be supplied by the members of one family. The solution to the problem (as with all the other shepherding communities in the high mountains of Europe)[4] was for several families to manage their flocks together (see below on sheepfolds).

Throughout the summer months shepherds labored together in sheepfolds (*stâna*) based on kinship or friendship under the leadership of a "head of the mountain," or *baci*. He coordinated the management of the sheep and kept rec-

ords, so that he could divide the costs and benefits among all the associates. The associates, however, participated in the hiring of the shepherds. There were (and are) various forms of ritual exchange of services—a tenant providing the inventory of the sheepfold might be entitled to the milk from the first milking, for example. It was up to the sheepfold's *baci* to establish an internal rotation of the flocks within its lands. Each owner who contributed sheep to a fold also had to provide flour, salt and footwear for the shepherds. If the associates of a sheepfold could not agree on hiring extra help, each had to provide 2–4 weeks of labor, depending on the number of sheep they owned. The *stâna* members also had elaborate means for keeping track of ownership of the animals using signs (*cioantă*) particular to each house. These *cioantă* consisted of perpendicular cuts (*obeada*), a "fork" cut (*fîrcuța*), or a hood cut (*cârlig*), which was a cut on the lateral part of the ear. A half-circle sign cut into the edge of the ear is called *chişcătura*.

These elaborate institutional forms of cooperation differ structurally from most arrangements among traditional peasant households. It is my hypothesis that these favored the shepherds in their dealings with communist authorities.[5]

2. TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE CLASS RELATIONS IN POIANA SIBIULUI: STAFFING OF THE COLLECTIVIZATION PERSONNEL AND THE ISSUE OF THE *CHIABURI*

As in other villages, the lists of *chiaburi* functioned between 1949–1959 as part of the extensive project to dissolve the old social order. According to oral testimony, the first employees with administrative functions who directed the local process of drawing up the list of *chiaburi* were either people who had been brought in from the Sebeş district, to which the commune belonged administratively, or locals who were not quite well-to-do, such as tradesmen who were not in the sheep breeding business, and the Gypsy mayor of the village, Boboloț. They were generally people who knew how to take advantage of the historical changes. People say that those who came from the district administration had been former servants in German households. Many of them were, or were said to be, of "Gypsy" origin. According to the informants, the first employees had a very poor education. Informants refer to them as "wretched people" (*prăpădiți*), a word with multiple meanings: "bad householders," "poor," "lazy" and "unfair." A villager from Poiana relates:

> The mayor they appointed was among the most wretched and the rest of the staff in the town hall were all the same. The executive committee was made only of poor people. We didn't mind them for being poor… but they were lazy people, who hadn't bothered to leave the village and to earn more; to multiply the number of their sheep, to make one hundred, or two, or three, or four hundred [sheep]. These people were those who used to hang around the village before and in the pub, all day long.[6]

Oral testimony is partly validated by official statistics. A table issued in 1951 labels 42 out of 53 deputies and employees as "poor peasants." Only two of them had occupations related to agriculture: one was a shepherd, the other a dairyman.[7]

Another interviewee talked about the difficulty that the elevation of social inferiors put the officials in:

> In Poiana, there was a Gypsy mayor. His mother was a Saxon-German, but his father had been a Gypsy. The guy was a blacksmith. Wasn't he cocking his nose? But he gave himself away. There was the stable where they kept the bulls at one end of the village. People had many cows back then and they needed a lot of bulls. There was a stud in the stables. A stud was really something in those times, like a Mercedes. And the mayor was riding the stud through the main street, wearing gloves on his hands. I saw him myself, I was a child then. The villagers in Poiana, who liked to pull people's leg, some of them would ask: Look at him! Why is he wearing those gloves? And another would answer: Well, it's cold up there on horseback, don't you realize? See, people didn't give a damn about the mayor.

As in lowland villages and other parts of Eastern Europe, the great difficulty the new regime had was that those labeled *chiaburi* had enjoyed a prestigious status within the community, and were regarded as good householders. The rhetoric of exploitation was often counter-productive in a milieu where people considered wealth to be the result of hard work, and of appropriate, even exemplary behavior in one's own household and in the community.[8] Although some critical discourse could be heard in communities dominated by prosperous villagers, an alternative model of an "appropriate" hegemonic behavior did not exist.[9]

The other "great divide" which the new authorities attempted to make use of was that between craftsmen and shepherds (though here the oral history is tainted by a history of cooperation and interdependence between these social categories). Despite the significant wealth of some of the craftsmen, it appears from personal recollections that none of them were labeled "exploiters," and that a significant number of village leaders were taken from their midst. We do not have detailed data on the history of this opposition, but the fact that there were two different dance houses (*hora*) for the children of shepherds and those of craftspeople is strongly indicative of a rather profound local division: in effect, girls from one category were clearly not expected to marry into the other. Using this division, the communists then tried to drive a wedge into the village by coopting a more socially successful and prestigious group than with the destitute and the Gypsies (see especially interview of Z.I. and B.L. to some extent).

As far as the creation of the list of *chiaburi* is concerned, all interviewees from the village of Poiana indicate the decision making process was arbitrary, espe-

cially in the early years of communism. Decisions were made based on the rivalry between the villagers and the representatives of the communist authorities, rather than to enforce rules. This is given fine expression by B.L.:

> B.L.: Those with smaller, shabby houses were not put on the exploiters' list. They didn't have much, just enough to eat. They had large families, grandparents, parents and their children. But those with wealthy households, they were declared *chiaburi*. All of them. The difference was that they were hired by the *chiaburi*. After military service, the *chiabur* would hire them by the month. The *chiabur* was the master. He owned the wool, the cheese, the lambs, everything. Here, on this street, they were all *chiaburi*. Not all of them from the start, but later they were all declared exploiters.
> Interviewer: That's how they became exploiters? According to the house they had?
> B.L.: Yes, the houses. That's how they did it in this village. Did you build a big house? You didn't? See, the poor man owns nothing. He couldn't make himself a big house. On the other side of the street, there were only barracks with shingle roofs or covered with cardboard.

Due to the structure of their property, and the state's intention to control the shepherds' resources, the first decisions to label people as exploiters were *formally* made with reference to the number of sheep owned (according to the interviewees, 120 sheep was the cut off point). The Plenary Session of the Communist Party, lasting from February 29 to March 1, 1952, established clearer rules for the identification and exposure of *chiaburi.* A decisive criterion in the case of the shepherds in Poiana Sibiului was "the exploitation of salaried work." Most shepherds in Poiana Sibiului needed help in managing their flocks, so they frequently hired one or more shepherds for the job. In this context, the case of O.I., a shepherd in Poiana Sibiului, is a suggestive example for the household of a *chiabur*:

TABLE 2. *The social and economic condition of the household of O.I., a* chiabur *in Poiana Sibiului:*

No. 43	O.I.[10]	Before 1947 married, 2 children, 1 servant, 1 house, 3 rooms; land 0.31, hay land 0.23, garden 0.05, vineyard 0.03, 130 sheep. After 1947 married, 2 children, 2 servants, 1 house, 3 rooms; land 0.29, hay land 0.23, works by himself, 230 sheep. Has exploited and is exploiting salaried work.

Source: Archive of the Local Council Poiana, file 59/1953

For a more general view, the social and economical average of the 122 families declared to be exploiters in 1952 is as follows:

TABLE 3. *The aggregate profile of the* chiaburi *in Poiana in 1952:*

Civil Status Married Single Widows	Children/ Family	Servants/ Household	Residence (no. rooms)	Arableland (hectares)	Animals/household Head		
					Sheep	Cows	Horses
108/5/9	*2,7*	*1,9*	*3,2*	*0,65*	*258*	*0,9*	*2,1*

Source: Archive of the Local Council Poiana, file 59/1953

As in other villages, those labeled *chiaburi* were forced to deliver exaggerated quantities of produce to meet their "compulsory quotas," as well as perform various "community labor" tasks. However, villagers from Poiana were often able to avoid their obligation to perform labor for the community, such as haying, due to the specific character of their trade and the various resources they had at their disposal. Because the villagers practiced transhumance and therefore were away from the village for long periods of time, local authorities had little control over them.[11] Additionally, they hired other villagers to do community labor in their place.

A more relevant strategy used by the *chiaburi* in Poiana to counteract the control of the state was to "buy" their removal from the *chiaburi* list by bribing local and district officials. The shepherds in Poiana had accumulated fortunes in the pre-war years and they could afford such payments. The following quotation from an interview with an ex-*chiabur* elucidates this situation:

> My brother-in-law, my sister's husband, he had been declared a *chiabur*. I remember it all very well. Anyway, it was in '52-'53-'54, something like that, and my brother-in-law went to see this guy, the vice president. And he gave him 80,000 [lei].[12] We went to the vice-president's home one night. "Neighbor"—he was his neighbor, you see—"Here you are." And he gave him the 80,000. After the first meeting, he was out of the list. […] He had been on the *chiaburi* list and they were killing them with duties and everything that was lost had to be paid by the *chiaburi*… Everyone would find a protector. I would find you to protect me, my wife would find someone else to protect her and you would have your own protector and so on. […] In time, they were all removed from the list. One by one, until there was no *chiaburi* left.[13]

The successful elimination from the lists is confirmed by the official documents of the time. A secret document addressed to the Executive Committee of the Local Council Poiana by the District Council Sebeş on July 20, 1953 includes a list of 37 *chiaburi* who had submitted petitions to be taken off the list. 30 petitions were approved.[14] This rate of successful applications (81 percent) is much higher than in other villages and districts (see Verdery's article in this volume).

While the practice of declaring people exploiters had achieved most of its goals in other villages, namely, the breakdown of the old social order and the installation of socialist control through economic oppression and repression, the result of this process in the commune Poiana Sibiului was very different. Due to the physical absence of the villagers, who were away for long periods of time, and because of the resources they had available, it was difficult for the authorities to oppress and control them.[15] To a great extent, the shepherds of Poiana Sibiului succeeded in preserving their material position and their status as members of the economic elite.[16] The new political elites promoted by the Communist Party co-existed with the economic elite of the shepherds. In this way, the class relations between the "exploiters," "poor peasants" and "middle peasants" were actually not reversed for very long.

The resistance to the process of labeling the wealthy peasants as *chiaburi* also reveals some weaknesses in the communist apparatus of repression, especially at the local level. The idea that the State could act as a unitary actor is a utopian supposition, at least in the case of the commune Poiana Sibiului. Take for instance the comments of the female party activist B.L. (who also worked for 28 years as cleaner and general dogsbody in the Mayor's office of Poiana), who was asked to help the officials in the business of identifying *chiaburi* and removing some of their property:

> The policeman went there. He wanted to take me with him in some 20 places, but I didn't want to go. I didn't need their sons to beat me up afterwards. What's in your mind? I told him: "You, mister, are going to be in this village for one year or two. Or maybe five. Then, you move away. That's how it works with your job. But I'm here to stay. I'm not going anywhere." (Her mother's loss of sight at this time meant that B.L. was left responsible for the house.)
> I told the policeman: "You won't have me open people's doors and break into their homes. No way! I'm not insane! How could I take things from their homes? You take their things. It's your job!"

There were other ways in which the realization of the plan was undermined. Discussing the treatment of the *chiaburi*, B.L. notes,

> Some had kids who were students at the University. *Chiaburi* children were not allowed into the universities. I used to ask for the President's indulgence on their behalf: "Mr. President, he's not a bad man. His brother's to blame. Leave him be, let him earn his bread."
> Then, there was a dentist, a doctor for humans and a vet. When they had their exam, one of them got confused, but I asked the President to let him pass the exam and he did so. He was a decent man.

3. THE FAILURE OF A COMMUNIST PROJECT. THE ORGANIZATION AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION "MIORIȚA"

For a few years (1959–1964), a Zootechnical "Comradeship" (*Întovărăşire*) called "Miorița" (The Ewe) was created in Poiana Sibiului, using 60 ha of pasture and hay land that lay at the outskirts of the village. The very name of this association, with its evocation of the urban myth of the "ancient Romanian shepherd" (which was a million miles from the actual experience of the shepherds, whom we can be sure were almost entirely unaware of the Romanian literary pastoral known as the *mioritic*) is illustrative of the way this structure was an outside imposition. Its main features, however, were its piffling size and dramatically inefficient functioning that brought about its dissolution after only a few years. Indeed it is striking that the villagers in Poiana hardly remember the existence of "Miorița." For most of them, it was an insignificant episode in their lives, and an example of the absurdity of the political regime of those times.

The Association was established following the orders of "those in high places." The amount of land it comprised was insignificant, if compared to the total surface of pastures and hay land owned by the commune Poiana. The land was not very productive, and was inappropriate even for animal breeding. The Association could not keep more than 2,000 sheep, "donated" by the villagers. Each household was forced to give a number of sheep to the Association (between one and ten, depending on the number of sheep counted at the census),[17] and to perform a number of duties (labor, mowing and haying). In exchange, the villagers annually received insignificant quantities of produce from the association.

It's obvious that the cost of joining the Association (less than 10 percent of the sheep they owned, on average) was far less for villagers from Poiana than other villages where collectivization was implemented. Joining the Association also had less impact on the villagers' lives. Although they joined the Association, the shepherds in Poiana did not stop their private sheep breeding business. The 2,000 sheep owned by the Association represented only 5 percent of the total number of sheep *declared and registered* in the Local Council records. Since these records almost certainly seriously underestimated, the actual "drainage" of the Association on the village holdings was probably even lower. Therefore, the decision to join the Association was regarded by the shepherds in Poiana as a mere formality; a way to avoid fines and other possible penalties. As for the obligatory labor days, oral testimony claims that the shepherds in Poiana used to pay poor peasants to work in their place.

> You had to manage with your own sheep, you couldn't rely on the association to give you anything. What could they do for the 1,000 households in the commune with only 1,000–2,000 sheep? And each household had two

> [families]. What could the association give to all these people? But this was the way it was in those times. Formalities…. They ordered the association to be made and the benefits were expected from somewhere else.[18]

As H.I., a tailor, states:

> It was a mockery of an association. It wasn't acceptable that a village didn't have any socialist structure. In our village there's no arable land, so they couldn't make a Cooperative (CAP). So, they decided to make this Association.

The Comradeship "Miorița" collapsed only five years after its inauguration. Of the few sheep still owned by the association, less than 400[19] were transferred to CAPs in neighboring villages. The plots of land that had been taken away from their private owners to be included in the Association were not transferred to the Local Council patrimony, according to a local official. They were returned to their former owners.

4. QUOTA COLLECTION AND THE RESISTANCE OF THE SHEPHERDS

> "Never ask a shepherd of Poiana how many sheep he has…"[20]

While most shepherds in Poiana regarded the association as a mere formality, the collection of compulsory quotas and obligatory contracts were much more important mechanisms of domination and economic control. Consequently, they are much better remembered by the villagers. This system was initiated in 1949 and implemented at a national level as an extreme, non-market solution to the acute alimentary crisis, obligations to the Soviet Union and the need to support the urban and industrial sector. According to the collection plan for the Poiana commune, the quantities of produce required to meet the obligatory quotas in 1952 were: 728,167 liters sheep milk; 47,493 liters cow milk; 81,559 kg wool and over 19,000 raw sheep skins.[21] According to the testimonies of the villagers, the quantities required per head of sheep were so exaggerated that meeting the quota would have impoverished the villagers. Even allowing for systematic underestimation in the censuses, the figures presented above indicate that their assessment was correct. The institutional change from compulsory quotas to compulsory contracts, which occurred between 1956 and 1959, brought only a slight relief from economic pressures, since the exploitation of the independent producers was maintained after this period.

In spite of the hostile political and economic background provided by repressive legislation and of the zeal of the administration to control the impressive resources of the shepherds in Poiana Sibiului, the latter successfully managed to

avoid delivering their produce to the state and preserve their economic advantages. We believe that transhumance played a decisive role in facilitating this form of resistance to the state control.

The following paragraph is an abstract from a petition submitted by the Poiana Local Council in 1952. The local Council petitioned for a larger grazing surface for the use of the commune, for tighter control of the shepherds "who wander around without control" and for a better management of the collection of the quotas. The text reveals the structural shortcomings of the local control apparatus, and the capacity of the transhumant shepherds to resist the system:

Local Council of the Commune Poiana Sibiului District Sebeş—Region Sibiu No. 2670/7.I.1952	to: GENERAL MILK AGENCY. affiliated to Centrocoon Dept. Org. Reception and Purchase Bucharest

> The Local Council of the commune Poiana […] hereby asks for your support with the Ministry of Agriculture, Pastures Department, in favor of our request that the mountains, which were used by the commune Poiana in the past and which presently belong to the Regions Vâlcea and Gorj, are restituted as a lease to the commune Poiana Sibiului. We submit this request, because the commune Poiana Sibiului has over 40,000 sheep and the pastures of the commune cover only 10 percent of the grazing needs.
> Taking this situation into account and also the fact that the producers should not be forced to wander around the country without control, under the form of migration, in order to find grazing places for the summer, we ask you to insist at the Ministry of Agriculture […] For a better control of the production and of the quota collection, we ask you to satisfy our request.
>
> PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL COUNCIL[22]

4.1. The declaration of the number of owned animals

The declaration of the number of animals one owned was an essential part of the collection mechanism, as quotas were calculated according to the number of animals registered. In lowland villages, the authorities could easily check if the number of registered animals was correct. In the case of the shepherds in Poiana who were continuously moving from the village to the mountains and other regions of the country, achieving such efficient control was far more difficult. The only control exerted by the authorities came from occasional checkups of the sheepfolds in the mountains, when they attempted shepherds by surprise. The sheepfolds were in the highlands, far from the village, in locations where access was difficult—at sites that can still take several hours to reach, even with today's much improved roads. When they could not avoid being checked by the authorities, the shepherds of Poiana found ways to develop informal relationships with the local officials and bribe the control agents. As one shepherd recalls:

> You had to declare your sheep. You had to have them registered. If you didn't and they caught you, they took you to court. And they used to come and count the sheep. […] And then you had to find a way out. If you were not acquainted with the agent you had to pay him off. Give him the money and the count came out right.[23]

The second method illustrates the creativity of the shepherds, and the "efficient networks" they utilized to cover for each other when the officials attempted to count their sheep. A shepherd in Poiana would make an agreement with a transhumant shepherd from another village who would be away with his sheep for a long period of time. If the control agents came to count the first shepherd's sheep, he would say the extra sheep belong to the second shepherd. But he was careful to declare the exact number of sheep his collaborator had registered. In this situation, the authorities would have needed to check on the two shepherds simultaneously and count their flocks, which was practically impossible due to the rigidity of the control apparatus and to the limited resources the inspectors had at their disposal. The following is suggestive:

> For us, who were practicing transhumance, it was different. […] We shepherds made agreements: "If they come to count yours"—they were counting the sheep right there, where you were with them, you know—"then you tell them that 50 are mine. For instance, I have declared 50 sheep and I'm registered with 50, so you tell them 50." But sometimes you got it wrong and you left about 30, 40, 50 sheep unregistered. Those were not registered. […] And then, they were asking over the phone: "What about this one? Is he registered with 50 sheep?" And they checked in their files "Yes, 50 sheep." But the guy had more. And when they came to count my sheep, I told them that part of the sheep belonged to the other guy. That's how it worked. There was no way they could catch you.[24]

This strategy used by the shepherds demonstrates the inflexibility of the state control apparatus. It had been designed to function in clearly delimited territorial and local administrative units, and was reasonably efficient when it came to controlling the land (as well as other means of production) in sedentarized villagers.[25] But it was almost completely ineffective in the case of the shepherds in Poiana, who were constantly ignoring the administrative limits and setting up their sheepfolds far from the villages. B.L., who worked in the Mayor's office, explains the difficulty of counting the sheep out in the hills:

> They could find out [how many there were] if they counted them. But who could leave the town hall to count the sheep? It would have taken months to count them all. And they were busy here at the town hall, to register the weddings, and the newborns and everything. There were lots of things to do here. Poiana is a big village (*sat mare*)… Ours was the biggest village in the

> area…We had our own doctor in the village. There were decent people in the community. Only the shepherds were big bastards. Thieves. Almost all of them are dead now. Their children and grandchildren have remained.

When she says that Poiana is a *sat mare*, she means that it held land in other parts of the country, and that the shepherds would rent out *stâna* from neighboring villages up in the high mountains. Therefore, the staff of her village would have to supervise a zone that could practically be coterminous with the whole country.

The following table, compiled from data available in the Poiana mayor's office, shows the effects of not declaring animals during the *cote*, and later during the period of contracts. Once many Poienari were employed at CAPs they could safely declare more animals. In the late 80s, many Poienari changed their residence to the places of CAPs in order to easily get rights (such as pastures) there. These *oieri* probably declared their sheep at these places, and this may explain the lower number of declared animals in Poiana in 1988.

TABLE 4. *Number of declared animals:*

Year	1940	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1986	1987	1988
Sheep	*80,000*	*38,000*	*19,871*	*14,778*	*22,905*	*29,438*	*53,223*	*53,309*	*53,328*	*33,312*
Cows	—	415	198	154	152	110	112	113	122	105
Pigs	—	30	41	10	7	26	129	109	131	167
Goats	—	71	120	26	6	3	41	41	47	51
Horses	800	449	234	183	174	115	159	161	166	161
Birds	—	4,721	6,466	5,975	5,025	3,440	5,820	5,782	5,925	6,163

Source: County Centre for Statistics, Popular Council.

4.2. Delivery of the collected produce to the collecting centers

Farmers in the lowland villages and animal breeders in highland villages who did not practice transhumance were required to deliver the compulsory quotas of produce to the local collection centers. In Poiana Sibiului, only a few shepherds who leased pasture land close to the village were required to do this.

The authorities were not able to force the transhumant shepherds to deliver their produce to the commune's local collection center. Given that the produce was perishable, it would have been absurd to force them to deliver the required quotas of milk, meat and wool. The local authorities made a compromise and allowed the shepherds to deliver their produce to collection centers in other villages and districts. The shepherds had to bring a certificate to the local council offices in Poiana as proof that they had delivered their quotas elsewhere. On basis

of these certificates, they were cleared of their debts to the local council. In addition, committees were appointed periodically to inspect the collection centers all over the country.

As they were free to deliver the quotas to any collection centre in the country they quickly identified the centers that collected a surplus beyond that required by the plan. The shepherds built up networks based on reciprocity, or they paid the collectors to register the surplus in their names and to give them delivery certificates. According to an interviewee: "You came to the Local Council with the proof "I delivered the quota." But in fact you hadn't delivered anything. You just got the certificate from the collector."[26]

5. THE EMPLOYMENT OF POIANA SHEPHERDS IN COLLECTIVE FARMS. A STRATEGY TO INCREASE THEIR WEALTH

"The state is the worst administrator."[27]

Starting in the 1960s, when the collectivization process was almost concluded in the plains, more and more shepherds in Poiana became employees of collective farms in villages all over the country. As N.I. puts it:

> Many of them did this. Those who didn't have [access to] grazing land, they went to find jobs with the CAPs. And the CAP hired them and allowed them to bring 100 of their sheep there… […] you had a contract with them. You were supposed to give them certain quantities of wool and of cheese, a specified number of lambs for each hundred sheep and you had to fulfill this plan. In exchange, you got payment and you didn't have to pay for grazing land and all that for your sheep.

After joining collective farms they continued working as shepherds. They took this course because private sheep breeding was becoming less sustainable, and because a position with a collective farm brought with it a series of advantages. Private shepherding had become a difficult business, especially since many lowland villages had been collectivized, so wintering in the proximity of these villages was no longer possible. The shift from quotas to contracts had not seriously improved the day-to-day lot of the private farmer. As H.I. puts it,

> The contracts were also quotas, but in another form. It was almost the same thing, only the name was changed. For the quota, you had to give produce for almost nothing. You had 100 sheep, your quota was 200 kg of wool. They paid a trifle for it [approximately. 3 cents]… The money you got for it was only symbolic. Not even enough for a beer. The contract, on the other hand,

> claimed to pay you the price fixed by the state. But even so, you lost. The real price was much higher. If you had a lamb and gave it for the quota, you got—let's say—100,000 lei for it. But its real price was 1,000,000 lei or even 2,000,000 lei. That's how it was.

Moreover, feed was not easy to get during the winter. Although many shepherds were transhumant throughout the entire communist period, they were outnumbered by those who chose to become employees in collective farms. Thus, 12 years after the collectivization process was completed, 30 percent of the shepherds in the commune Poiana were registered as private shepherds, while 60 percent were employed. This was not entirely a matter of choice. As H. I., the craftsman puts it:

> At first, they were reluctant to go and made fun of those who went. "Look what's become of you, to work at the Cooperative," they used to say. It was something shameful, meaning: "You're so impotent that you can no longer manage 100–200 sheep and be your own master? Now you're a servant at the CAP?" But later they realized that those employed in CAPs were doing much better than the owners. The owners had many obligations, the employees had none. The CAP was keeping their sheep for them, all they had to do was to manage them.

In most cases they were hired as administrators of the farm's sheep, and their responsibility was to achieve the established production plan. They had a few shepherds as subordinates. Due to their position, to the responsibilities of their job, the salary they received from the collective farms was an important source of income.

Above all, the Poiana shepherds were allowed to bring their private sheep to the farm and administrate them along with the farm's flock. The number of private sheep depended on the shepherd's working norm, the total number of sheep in the farm, and the good will of the president of the collective farm. According to one man, if a collective farm had 2,000 sheep, an employed shepherd could keep 100–150 sheep of his own with them. The arrangement had many advantages for the shepherd. Grazing and wintering costs were covered by the farm. The shepherd received impressive quantities of grain from the farm. Basically, shepherds used the collective property to their own benefit and had free pastures, free feed and even animals. The shepherds developed informal relations with the presidents, engineers and department leaders of the collective farms, paying them off in either money or produce. Local jokes, corroborated by interviews, reveal that the only sheep to become ill and die were those of the collective farm, while the shepherds' lambs were always the fattest in the flock. Thus, there was a permanent conversion of resources from collective to private.[28]

Another substantial income source was the farm's flock itself. The shepherds did their best to produce more than was required by the plan. They took the sur-

plus for themselves, alledging that it was produced by their private sheep. Their employment enabled them to obtain producer certificates that permitted them to sell the produce from their sheep, as well as from the farm's sheep. A shepherd formerly employed by a collective farm said that:

> You had a contract for fixed quantities. For instance, if the contract said you had to give 8 kg cheese for each sheep, that's what you had to give. If you produced 14 kg, it wasn't their business. […] We would sell the surplus, but we told them it came from our sheep, not the CAP's. […] They didn't care very much what we did. They only wanted you to pay what you had to pay and to fulfill the plan.[29]

In contrast with most of the collectivized peasants in the lowland villages, who were exploited by the communist structures, the shepherds had a privileged position and even power. B.L., again:

> They were the masters, and they didn't give an account of what they did to anyone. The cooperative put them in charge of all the sheep. When a sheep had two lambs, they registered only one and kept the other in their flock. You can't imagine! Those wretched shepherds committed huge robberies.

This "balance of forces" was obvious in conflicts between peasants and shepherds, when the latter generally came off victorious. According to a peasant in the lowland village Apoldu, situated only 12 km away from Poiana Sibiului:

> Whenever you messed with the shepherds, nothing good came out… *They* brought their sheep on your grain fields and if you dared say something against them, in the end *you* were to blame. In the times of the CAP, I never won one single case against the shepherds. They bribed the president and who knows who else, they gave them lambs and cheese and you didn't stand a chance. The shepherds had the power.[30]

By working for the collective farms and using different strategies to avoid the quota collection system and the compulsory contracts, the Poiana shepherds accumulated fabulous fortunes in the communist period. The following quotation is suggestive:

> To tell the truth, the commune Poiana should build Ceauşescu a golden statue, if you consider what fortunes they made during his time….The profit was all theirs. 15–20 new houses were built in the village every year in Ceauşescu's time.[31]

6. FINAL COMMENTS

The assertion "Land enslaves man. That's poverty," expresses a divergent view from the traditional "land loving" good householder (*gospodar*), and may be read as indicating an acute understanding of the dynamics of power in the communist period. In addition to the mobility of their resources, an important role was played by the mobility of the people themselves. Territorial mobility offered the Poiana shepherds a wide range of options, and helped them acquire a number of strategies to resist state domination, increase their wealth and improve their social status. They were, in brief, less legible to the state than most of the people discussed in this book.[32]

The communist state planned to depersonalize the collectivized peasants and control them through socialist structures. The shepherds built or transformed the system of horizontal relations (or relations with other shepherds), and vertical relations (or relations with the local authorities). These informal relations were, at least in the case of the Poiana shepherds, more flexible than the structures of state domination. The shepherds' success in interacting with the communist structures may also have been partially due to their understanding of the various forms of collective mutual help that had functioned in the past. Within the informal association, there was a collective holding of the pastures and a mutual protection of the flocks. Katherine Verdery argues in this volume that a successful relationship with communist institutions was conditioned by the knowledge of certain formal requirements and specific jargon. In this case, pre-existent forms of collaboration may have been equally important for the shepherds' adaptation to the requirements of the new regime.

The history of Poiana Sibiului, and the neighboring villages near Mărginimea Sibiului, makes them stand out among other cases presented in this volume. How can their peculiar development be explained? What are the social conditions that permitted and facilitated this particular development direction? We argue that the answers can only be found if we take the history of the community into account, as well as the economical and political strategies employed by its members.

Until 1918, the region, which is situated at the foot of the Southern Carpathians' alpine pastures, had been the borderland of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for almost three hundred years. Like other areas defined by states as political borders, its social and political position was ambiguous. The mountains lay far from the centers of political authority (in relative if not absolute terms), and access to the villages was difficult, especially during the long winters. As a result, the local population lived in isolation and was often beyond the reach of the economic and administrative centers of Budapest (before 1918) and Bucharest (afterwards). On the other hand, in order to trade their produce, people had to cross the mountains. This resulted in the development of many commercial centers offering the villagers a market for their surplus produce and for their craftwork. The fact that the mountains were natural borders between empires and nations provided area residents with opportunities for commerce, business and other types of trade on

grounds that were familiar to them, while being hostile and inaccessible to strangers. Commerce was also facilitated by the fact that most people had relatives who lived in villages situated in the southern Carpathians, within the territory of the Old Kingdom. After the unification of Romania, when Poiana Sibiului was no longer a borderland, the old transnational routes were maintained.

In the case of Poiana, their commercially-oriented transhumant shepherding offered the shepherds an opportunity to build relationships with people outside of their region. They were able to find temporary jobs and new trading partners, and had access to knowledge and information stretchingfar beyond the Sibiu region. A testament to these people's remarkable capacity to adapt to new situations lies in the paradox of their status: on one hand, they were isolated from the political and administrative mainstream. At the same time, they were opened to the world and had great mobility, which gave them access to knowledge beyond their region, and even beyond the political borders of the country. This is what enabled the villagers of Poiana to resist the oppression of the communist authorities, and even to turn oppressive measures to their benefit, unlike most of Romania's rural population.

Especially during the first period of communist domination, the strategies used by the shepherds of Poiana generally utilized their own marginalization, as the transhumant shepherds were "wandering about outside anyone's control," as the document above-cited above puts it. It would be wrong to minimize other factors, such as ecological constraints. Carrying out the kind of detailed investigations Verdery talks about on a village that could be reached only after a day-long journey on a badly maintained road was difficult and expensive. Even if the agents made the effort to get there, there was a minimal chance they would find the heads of the families at home, as most of the male shepherds did not spend more than a few nights a year in the village. But there is something much more important, we suspect: the politics of the local communist party.

Unlike the villages in Maramureş, villages in Mărginimea Sibiului did not have a reputation for being members of a distinct church (Greek Catholics in Kligman's case), or ambivalence towards the state (see Gail Kligman's comments on the resistance of villagers to the compulsory military service, as well as Vultur's study). There was nothing to justify the "special treatment" that Ieud received, due to the reputation of the village as "a reactionary center." Surely, if the authorities in Sebeş (the city which was the centre of the district in that period) had determined to stop the private activities of the shepherds in Poiana at all costs, they would most likely have succeeded in doing so. On the other hand, due to the authorities' haste in implementing the reforms in cities and in villages, and to the absence of any evidence of negative cultural or political attitudes in the villages in Mărginimea Sibiului, the inhabitants of this area "made a narrow escape."

In effect, the abundance of "manipulable resources,"[33] and a certain freedom regarding the constraints of "respectable" society, empowered these shepherds.[34] There is material concerning reindeer herders in the Soviet arctic that contains suggestive parallels. Joachim Habeck shows how "being an employee of the *sov-*

hoz yields considerable advantages for the owner of a large number of private reindeer" who is able to manipulate the system just like the Poienari.[35] David Andersen also talks of the symbiosis of herders and Soviet forms as "state nomadism."[36] But the most striking parallel comes in data collected in the Polish mountains. Frances Pine has published a series of articles on Polish shepherds, the Gorale, whose ancestors were transhumant Vlachs.

Just like the shepherds of Poiana, the Gorale are a marginal frontier population who treated the state as a resource to be exploited rather than a parent whose protection they needed in order to prosper.[37] In an early study, Pine demonstrated how the villagers undermined the successive efforts of the communists to take over the control of local social structures. The ways in which they accomplished this are reminiscent of the villagers of Poiana.[38] In a more recent article, Pine describes how speculative and entrepreneurial orientation to the exterior world (an orientation identified by Pine with the liberationist individualism of "trickster" behavior) can cohabitate with a behavior within the community that facilitates the development of households similar to any prosperous peasant household, at least superficially. Pine argues that, in the case of the Gorale population, the first type of behavior is restricted to the transactions performed by Polish peasants outside the village. By contrast, in the environment of the domestic economy and of the village community, the Gorale suppress these forms of radical individualism and blatantly ego-oriented behavior. Considered from this perspective, they appear as "real peasants." When they operate outside the village, they behave in a completely different manner, appearing more as skilled entrepreneurs than as genuine peasants. The norms of gender and generation that operate within the village are abolished or even reversed; egoism, entrepreneurial skills and innovation become the best-appreciated qualities. In other words, a dual behavioral code can be detected in these communities, and we presume that ethnographic research could bring proof of the existence of models like this in the case we study. It's suggestive that the villagers of Poiana are perceived (and accept to be perceived) as "shepherds" (*ciobani*) while outside of the village; that is, as people who live without a roof above their heads, without women and beyond morality. However, in the village, behind the tall fences of their households, they insist on being regarded not as *ciobani* but as "sheep proprietors" (*oieri*). That is to say, as respectable householders and heads of families.

6.1. Plan, policy and implementation.

When writing about the behavior of modern states, there is a danger of treating the activities of officials as part of the expression or realization of a central plan. This danger is all the greater when dealing with what we can loosely call totalitarian regimes trying to implement "five-year plans," campaigns, "final solutions," and the like. If we think of collectivization as the implementation of a clearly formed model, the case of Poiana looks absurd and implausible: why did the state not simply impose its policy on these wayward mountain dwellers as it did in Ieud

or Banat? The fact that the ecological conditions in Ieud were not so dissimilar to my region would underpin this argument. My suggestion would be, however, that it may be helpful to see a case like that of Ieud or Tomnatic not so much as the inevitable result a central plan being implemented, but as the outcome of a whole series of conjunctures, alignments, and constellations of local, regional and national social forces. I do not wish to deny that the intentions of the rulers of the Party-State, and the various mechanisms set in place to transmit models and orders from centre to periphery, played an important role in the course of events. Obviously, overarching goals, as well as the terms of reference and discussion, are largely products of the center (and some negotiations with the localities no doubt). But as state policy develops on the ground, even in rigidly centralized and repressive regimes, its form is governed by political constellations outside the policy.

In the case of a social institution, such as segregation in the United States—which was established between 1870 and 1900 across a whole tranche of southern states without any central coordination (see the Jim Crow laws)—it is obvious that, what post-hoc looks like a fairly uniform set of institutional arrangements, can arise in an ad-hoc (but not thereby arbitrary) fashion. In the case of collectivization—which was, after all, a party policy working with a pre-formed model—there are, naturally, other forces at work. I am suggesting, heuristically at least, that we should look at the archive to seek out the local, the unplanned and the improvised responses to the unplannable. If we see collectivization in this light, the existence of "exceptions" becomes less of a mystery. One might apply the same argument, by the way, to the international history of collectivization, in order to explain the peculiarity of the Polish case, where, notoriously, very little land was collectivized.

NOTES

1 Just like other transhumant populations, see Laurence Fontaine, *A History of Pedlars in Europe* (London–New York: Routledge, 1996).

2 Archive of the Local Council in the commune Poiana Sibiului, file 6/1952.

3 Cornel Irimie, Nicolae Dunăre and Paul Petrescu, *Mărginenii Sibiului* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiintifică şi Enciclopedică, 1985).

4 See, for example, John K. Campbell, *Honour Family and Patronage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); and Sandra Ott, *The Circle of Mountains: A Basque Shepherding Community* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

5 Note that in a comparative perspective the arrangement of the sheepfolds here appears to parallel that of the *stâna* reported on by Campbell in *Honour Family and Patronage*, rather than the very elaborate and enduring *olha* of the Basque shepherds based in the Pyrenees, discussed by Ott in *The Circle of Mountains*. The essential difference being that the *Olha* involved a full scale and enduring parallel social structure into which houses were more or less fixed in perpetuity, whereas the *stîna* of the Sarakatsani formed and re-formed each year.

6 Răzvan Stan, interview with F.I., 80 years old, male, former sheep owner, May 9, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.

7 Archive of the Local Council in the commune Poiana Sibiului, file 46/1951.
8 Edit Fél and Tamas Hoffer, *Proper Peasants: Traditional Life in a Hungarian Village* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.,1969).
9 See, also Timothy Mitchell, "Everyday Metaphors of Power," *Theory and Society,* 19 (1990), 545–577.
10 Archive of the Local Council in the commune Poiana Sibiului, file 59/1953.
11 The transhumant shepherds of Poiana, who were at the same time family heads, used to spend very few days a year in the village. They came to the village mainly for religious holidays (Christmas and Easter) and to celebrate major family events (weddings, funerals, Christenings).
12 At that time, the average salary was of about 1,000 lei. Compared to this figure, the economic power of the shepherds is obvious.
13 Răzvan Stan, interview with N.I., 81 years old, male, former sheep owner, May 4, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
14 Archive of the Local Council in the commune Poiana Sibiului, file 59/1953.
15 The only exceptions are the cases of a few shepherds born in Poiana Sibiului who had settled in Dobrogea and were living there in the early period of communism. Their occupation was sheep breeding and farming. The region of Dobrogea was famous for the harsh measures used by the authorities to implement collectivization. As a result, the land, animals and farming implements of the villagers were confiscated and they were deported to other regions in the country. However, these cases represent a minimal percentage from the total number of transhumant shepherds, who were registered as residents of the commune Poiana.
16 In the 1960s the shepherds began to join the communist party.
17 Răzvan Stan, interview with S., 78 years old, former office worker with the Local Council in the commune Poiana Sibiului, May 8, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
18 Razvan Stan, interview with D.I., 80 years old, former sheep owner, May 4, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
19 Archive of the Local Council in the commune Poiana Sibiului, file 115/1959
20 Răzvan Stan, interview with V.I., 83 years old, former sheep owner, May 6, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
21 Archive of the Local Council in the commune Poiana Sibiului, file 46/1951.
22 Archive of the Local Council in the commune Poiana Sibiului, file 6/1959, emphasis added.
23 Răzvan Stan, interview with N.I., 81 years old, former sheep owner, May 4, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
24 Răzvan Stan, interview with D.I., 80 years old, former sheep owner, May 5, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
25 See Katherine Verdery, "The Elasticity of Land: Problems of Property Restitution in Transylvania," *Slavic Review,* 53 (Winter 1994) 4, 1071–1109, for evidence of how even land could be hidden.
26 Răzvan Stan, interview with D.I., 80 years old, former sheep owner, May 5, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
27 Răzvan Stan, interview with V.I., 83 years old, former sheep owner, May 6, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
28 See Joachim Habeck's 2005 124–126 for an exact Siberian parallel.
29 Răzvan Stan, interview with N.I., 81 years old, former sheep owner, May 4, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.

30 Dumitru Budrală, interview with G.N., 77 years old, farmer, September 15, 2002, commune Apoldu de Jos.
31 Răzvan Stan, interview with S., 78 years old, former office worker with the Local Council of the Commune Poiana Sibiului, May 2, 2004, commune Poiana Sibiului.
32 See James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
33 Resources not envisaged by the production plan, see Caroline Humphrey, *Marx Went Away, but Karl Stayed Behind* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 195.
34 Sophie Day, Evthymios Papataxiarchis and Michael Stewart, eds., *The Lilies of the Field: Marginal People who Live for the Moment* (Boulder, Co.: Westview, 1998).
35 Joachim Habeck. *What it Means to be a Herdsman. The Practice and Image of Reindeer Husbandry among the Komi of Northern Russia* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005), 122.
36 David Andersen, *Identity and Ecology in Arctic Siberia. The Number One Reindeer Brigade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 37–42.
37 Frances Pine, "Incorporation and Exclusion in the Podhale," in Day, et al., eds., *Lilies of the Field*, 67–88.
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Persuasion, Delay and Coercion. Late Collectivization in Northern Moldova: The Case of Darabani (Suceava Region)

DORIN DOBRINCU

> "You cannot escape death or the *kolhoz*."
>
> Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's speech to a group of Moldavian peasants at the end of collectivization, cited in Gheorghe Gaston Marin, *În serviciul României lui Gheorghiu-Dej. Însemnări din viață* (Bucharest: Evenimentul Românesc, 2000), 109.

As Romania was the last country in the Soviet bloc to complete collectivization, so the region of Suceava (which included Bukovina and the extreme northern part of Moldavia) was the last Romanian region to officially mark completion, in March of 1962. Why was Suceava so delayed? There are three hypotheses: (1) hoping that the communist regime would not last, local peasants fiercely resisted collectivization (the most tempting);[1] (2) the limited interaction between the peasants and authorities, and the relatively weak nature of the communist state during the 1950s (in other words, the communist regime's inability to force peasants into collective farms); and (3) the geography of Suceava, with its mountainous districts that were ill suited for large-scale collectivization. Evidence partially substantiates all three positions, but the most probable are the last two.

This chapter explores collectivization in Darabani, Northern Moldavia. Darabani is particularly interesting because a possible timeframe for the collectivization process here shows 11 years of "benevolent" collectivization (1950–1961), followed by 12 days of "general" collectivization by force (March 4–March 16, 1962). To present a picture of all the factors that contributed to years of successful resistance, followed by the rapid final capitulation, I have focused especially on the social structure of the village from the 1940s to the 1960s; the relationship between the peasants and the state; the role of a myth of salvation, "The Americans are coming!"; the establishment of an "experimental" or first GAC in 1950; and finally, the extent and nature of collectivization efforts, and the means by which the last push in March 1962 finally succeeded. My sources consist of documents and manuscripts in the Botoşani County Division of the National Archives,[2] the archives of the Darabani City Hall, and data compiled by local history adepts, who carried out 33 interviews (both structured and unstructured) in July 1997, and December 2000 to March 2001.

1. THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF DARABANI BETWEEN THE 1940S AND 1960s

Darabani is situated in a hilly and relatively fertile area on the Prut River, in the current county of Botoşani.[3] Administratively speaking, in the pre-communist period Darabani was a town belonging to Dorohoi county. Under the 1950 administrative reform, in order to conform to a Soviet model, the old administrative units (counties and districts) were replaced by new regions and districts with new borders. Darabani was relegated to the administrative status of a commune, and served as the administrative center of a district with the same name included in the Botoşani region between 1950 and 1952, and in the Suceava region between 1952 and 1960. A further administrative change implemented in 1960 dismantled the Darabani district, incorporating it into the Dorohoi district. In yet another new administrative reform in 1968, Darabani regained the status of "town." It was subdivided into the neighborhoods of Suseni, Bombeni, Mărgineni and Corneşti, as well as the villages of Bajura, Teioasa, and the smaller Eşanca, Lişmănița and Locovița.

The people of Darabani had planted deep roots in the area by the time the communist authorities began to transform state and society. (The first confirmed documents of Darabani's existence date back to the middle of the sixteenth century.) The 1930 census noted that Darabani had 10,748 inhabitants: 8,834 Romanians, 1,884 Jews (concentrated near the market where they were merchants and craftspeople), and 30 inhabitants of other ethnic origins.[4] The 1956 census noted a slight population decrease to 10,557 inhabitants[5] (the village of Conceşti—which was integrated in Darabani in 1926—became a commune in that year). Without a doubt, there would have been a natural population increase between 1930 and 1956. But there were large losses from the extermination of the Jewish population, deaths on the battlefields of World War II, typhoid fever and postwar famine, especially from 1941 to 1947. From a religious viewpoint, most Romanians in the village were Orthodox Christians during this period, although a relatively important and growing number were neo-Protestant Christians (Adventists, Evangelicals and Pentecostals). People were tied to the land, caring very much for their property, which was a symbol of social success. My respondents talked frequently about ways of obtaining land. This could be achieved by inheriting it from parents, "through shedding blood" (after serving in the First and Second World Wars), or purchasing it through "sweat" (a metaphor for exhausting work), by renouncing even necessities, etc.

With the exception of small portions of forest and the communal pasture created after the 1921 land reform, individual property rights constituted the basis for land ownership. Except at peak seasons and only as necessary, when they would appeal to relatives in their extended family or day laborers for help, the residents of Darabani worked their land with their immediate family. Although Romanian village society never had the idyllic character imagined by some intellectuals, peasants prospered considerably between the two world wars in Dara-

bani. Contrary to the desires of the post-1947 authorities, most peasant families became buyers rather than sellers of land. Also, peasants displayed a sense of independence that still remains little studied.

Like other totalitarian regimes, the Romanian communist regime instituted a vast program of social engineering to change social realities throughout the country, including the villages. After 1944, property rights were significantly altered by successive structural reforms, such as the land reform of March 1945; the expropriation of the last vestiges of the grand estates on March 2–3, 1949; "donations" to the state made under duress; and the establishment of collective farms through land mergers and donations. Gradually, many of the most fertile sections of land owned by the community became "socialist" property.

1.1. Well-to-do, middle and poor peasants

By the end of World War II, Darabani's well-to-do farmers (*gospodari*) were not the heirs of the big landowners of old, who had left Darabani decades before, but came mostly from the ranks of ordinary peasants who had risen through hard work ("they would eat on the run") and good management ("they would walk around in rags"). In the late 1940s and early 1950s, there were very few properties of more than 10 ha. Moreover, the land was not located in a single plot but in non-contiguous small strips, often at great distances apart. Those that were larger were held by peasants known as "good managers" (*gospodari*).

Darabani peasants measured their wealth in land and cattle, rather than by the size of their houses. In general, peasants owned timber homes plastered with clay and covered with thatch, and only infrequently with shingle or straw. Birth rates throughout Moldavia were high—the region had contributed the most to Romania's population growth—and the better-off peasants were known to have more children than average. It was not uncommon for a *gospodar* family to have ten children and to do everything possible to acquire a few hectares for time when their children would set up their own households. Because inheritance rights among children were equal under both Romanian customary law and the Civil Code, it was by no means certain that they would inherit the social status of their parents. (Thus, marriages were in general based on economic considerations.) Farming was done with rudimentary tools and equipment. The arms of the peasants and the power of the oxen were the basis for working the land. Additionally, the *gospodari* were part of a web of family and neighborhood relations that was invisible to the outside observer. Those who attained prosperity hardly fit the Leninist template of the ruthless exploiter. On the contrary, prosperous peasants were valued in the villages as models of good management and the amassing of wealth. They were especially admired by the middle peasants, but even the poor peasants said that those later designated as *chiaburi*, or "exploiters," were in fact *gospodari*.

As in the rest of the country, *gospodari* were a frequent target of communist constraint during the 1950s.[6] The regime labeled Darabani's *gospodari* as *chiaburi.* In a 1952 table, 66 Darabani villagers were labeled *chiaburi*, along with a

handful of local Jewish merchants.[7] As a result, the often-enforced threat of judicial sequestration of their homes and basic necessities forced them to pay unreasonably high requisitions.[8] The chief of the local tax collectors during the 1950s, a man bearing the suggestive name of *Zghiară* [Claw], gave his underlings the following instructions:

> You are to go to the *chiaburi*. Don't stand on their doorsteps and beg them, because even if they have attics full of bread and stables full of cattle, they would not give anything to the state […] You are to go to him, enforce the law, strip him down, "take care" of him.[9]

For failure to deliver the assigned requisitions, many so-called chiaburi were arrested and condemned to prison. Some died during their confinement.[10]

Most of the peasants in Darabani were middle-income peasants or *mijlocaşi* (i.e., owners of 2 to 5 ha of land, several work animals, pigs, poultry for family consumption, and farm implements). Their needs and living standards were modest, but these amounts permitted an existence that many of those who are now in their 70's and 80's recall with nostalgia, particularly in comparison with life in the collectives.

Even though their standard of living was fairly miserable, middle peasants were not disposed to surrender their small holdings in favor of collective property. As was also the case with the *gospodari*, they did not want to associate themselves with those they denigrated as the village poor (*calici*). For the middle peasants, it was the *gospodari* and not the poor who represented the model of the future.[11] Toward the end of the 1950s, a new category appeared in the language used by the authorities—"middle peasants on their way to becoming *chiaburi*." These were peasants who, through good management, were acquiring wealth in spite of repressive measures.[12] The *mijlocaşi* are hardly mentioned in official documents, and represented a problematic category for the regime: they formed the majority of the rural population, and did not desire to change the relative security of their own little properties for the "unknown" in the GAC.

Finally, the case of poor peasants is as interesting as that of *chiaburi* because the *calici*, were regarded by the Party, following the Stalinist line, as its rural social base.[13] Outside of propaganda formulas, the existence of this category is difficult to reconstruct through documents. My informants referred to them in general terms, using set formulas: *calici*[14] (a concept originally designating an infirmity but in twentieth century Moldavian rural society, associated with extreme poverty), "bad workers" and "drunkards." Peasants considered that dire poverty was caused by character defects and a lack of willpower. In any event, the category was of limited relevance in the village, for there were few *calici* in Darabani. Nonetheless, it was from their ranks that the Party recruited (although not exclusively) activists, policemen and the first collective farmers. Encouraged by the authorities, many of them became arrogant and violent.[15]

1.2. Party activists and government officials

Older residents of Darabani do not have pleasant memories of the individuals who achieved power at the local level after 1944. During the Soviet military presence in the area (1944–1945), peasants were subject to abuses perpetrated by Romanian citizens "delegated" by the Soviets to collect food for the Red Army. Most were ethnic Romanians, as well as a few traumatized Jewish survivors of the camps in the Trans-Dnister region. In the following years, the obedient communist authorities instituted a policy of terror in the village. Local leaders of the former opposition parties were jailed or sent to forced labor camps, like the Danube–Black Sea Canal, that the regime established all over the country—"the grave of the Romanian bourgeoisie," according to one famous phrase from the period.[16]

One respondent described the terror exercised then by the activists:

> In the era of P.D. and C., if you fell into their hands you needed no better friends. They would bleed you dry. They would come and take your cow and if you had said something they would yell "Shut up! Are you against the Party?" Stalin was still alive when they came and threatened me: "You said you don't need Stalin, right? You want to shit in his mouth?" They would talk like that, to frighten you. To be safe, when you heard the word "Stalin" you kept quiet, as he was the master back then. The same went for the Party. They didn't behave the way people should, they were very harsh, so people would be afraid, and in the end people became fearful. I thought to myself, "Act passive, because if you're not, they catch fire at once!" For if you dared to raise your head a bit, they would accuse you of doing politics, and then you'd be called to the Securitate headquarters, at first […] to see who you are.[17]

Peasants learned rapidly to be very cautious with the representatives of the regime, irrespective of rank:

> They would come to my gate yards. Then, to see if I say something… I was careful not to say anything improper, because if I did they'd take me away. We all kept our mouths shut. I would stand and look at them… They were the lowest kind of people! They wouldn't think of people at all… And no one knew if you were weeping. No one was allowed to lament. If you felt like weeping, you could do it only inside your home, in secret. But it was forbidden to complain anywhere. Those were the problems…[18]

The communist regime did not use terror alone to impose its dominance, but also persuasion and an appeal to people's self-interest. Public status superior to that of the past, evidenced by state and Party positions, salary, and elevated social status proved irresistible to the marginalized individuals the Party relied upon.

Respondents frequently mentioned abuses by state officials in the years of collectivization: collectors appropriating the requisitions (the peasants being obligated to pay again), the endless demands in the name of the state, the arbitrary behavior of the police and Securitate, the spread of injustice. One person said,

> When the new government was getting on its feet, at the beginning, people came from the "Tudor Vladimirescu" or the "Horea, Cloşca and Crişan" [divisions of the army]. Then instead, they put in people from our village, the most backward ones. These people would harass those with more land, would make them go to the People's Council, make them cart rocks, whip them, fine them, and I don't know what else, just to have something to do. This Communist Party took people from the bottom and put them on top. And those people oppressed the others severely. They would rob people, take their land, summon them to the Securitate headquarters, send them home, call them again… Problems like this, on and on, on and on. […] The police in those times came from, how should I put this… from the dregs of society. The state gave them a gun and a uniform. And they only did the dirtiest work.[19]

Official records mentioned only dereliction by functionaries and then only when higher authorities discovered paperwork irregularities.[20]

Although we lack data on who held positions in the commune People's Council from the late 1940s into early 1950s, we do have such data for the year before the end of collectivization (1962). On March 29, 1961, the commune People's Council in Darabani responded to a request from the Dorohoi district, forwarding a table of its employees with identifying information. In total there were 32 positions, one of which was vacant. Most of the employees were young (four were born before 1910, eight between 1910 and 1920, nine between 1920 and 1930, and 10 between 1930 and 1938) and male (the Council only had four female employees: a main clerk, a librarian and two caretakers). All employees were, without exception, members of the Party or its political allies: nine Party members (among them the Council chairman and secretary), two members of the Communist Youth (the librarian and a guard) and 20 members of the Ploughman's Front. Most of the important positions were occupied by people from outside the locality, some of whom were from other regions. This was probably a deliberate policy to destroy local solidarity. Most of the employees (including the president) were of peasant extraction. Functionaries with an education were primarily "technocrats" (the secretary, accountants, the librarian, etc.) and teachers (the director of the cultural center). It is noteworthy that, although the three forest rangers came from Darabani, none were from the commune center, but rather its peripheral villages.[21]

These "outsiders" are often mentioned in official documents, and in the accounts of my interviewees.[22] Some of these outsiders had impressive careers in Darabani. For example, P.H. served as chairman of the People's Council and GAC

chairman, in which position he also acquired wealth by bartering wheat for timber—which was scarce in the region—in Bukovina.[23] The zeal of these outsiders (such as A.C., a war refugee appointed as teacher in the village)[24] was crucial for collectivization. They provided a social base for the Party, and were in the front ranks of the collectivization effort, continuing to be extremely visible in the final push in March of 1962.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP OF PEASANTS WITH THE STATE

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the peasants had few interactions with the state. They paid taxes, performed services for central and local authorities, and served in the army for two to three years. Compulsory education was limited to four and then seven years; few children of peasants went to high school and these were mostly in the late 1950s and beginning of the 1960s. Fewer still went on to university. In the early 1950s, the majority of Darabani peasant households were not politically or economically vulnerable in their interactions with authorities. The number of government employees was still negligible. And in economic terms, the peasants themselves produced what was necessary to survive. They bought few things—salt, lamp oil, farm tools and clothing (although normally linen was produced at home). There were not even electric bills to pay; electrification did not reach Darabani until the late 1960s.

The situation had changed gradually by 1960. The number of officials grew, all employed by the People's Council. State enterprises and even collectives had a direct relation with the state as dependents. Thus, in 1960, out of 3,000 *gospodari* in Darabani, 600 were workers and officials without land.[25] This meant that a fifth of the population could be utilized for mass work to collectivize the other four-fifths. Dependence on the educational system also increased, enabling the state to use peasant children to blackmail their parents, particularly in the final moment of collectivization in 1962.

3. HOPE FOR CHANGE: "THE AMERICANS ARE COMING!"

When asked about their hopes, one theme was recurrent with my respondents: they all believed in rumors about an imminent but radical political change that would result in the fall of the communist regime. This hope was encapsulated in the messianic slogan "The Americans are coming!" Considering the recent events of 1989, this might be expected for the late 1980s, but most peasants identified the existence of this rumor prior to the end of collectivization—especially during the period preceding the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Even if, by and large, information about the wider world was limited in the rural environment, some interested residents with radios listened intensely to the western broadcasts in the Romanian, such as the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Vatican

Radio and the BBC.[26] One respondent recalled: "I was somehow encouraged to believe it. 'Still, still, something has to change, something has to change, since as they're saying, that things are being done, things are being done [by the Americans], so something has to happen sometime!'"[27] Another peasant evinced indomitable optimism:

> I was waiting for the Americans. I would tune in my radio to keep track of things as they developed. Again and again and again what I heard on the radio encouraged me so I was telling myself: "May God help us be rid of them [the communists]. If not this year, then perhaps next year. And if not next year, then the year after." I waited and I waited until my wish was granted, as you can see today.[28]

Many peasants supported the heavy requisitions, refusing to part with their land because for a long time they hoped the international situation would evolve favorably for Romania.[29] The hopes for external salvation could partially explain the length of the collectivization process in Darabani, and possibly in other areas. Parenthetically, the same hope was crucial in keeping an armed anticommunist resistance going, and in encouraging those who were in prison. Today we know that this hope was unfounded, but there were moments in the late 1940s and early 1950s when a number of major conflicts between the free world and the Communist bloc might have brought the desired change: the Berlin Crisis of 1948, the Korean War (1950–1953), etc. Even so, however, the rural world in Romania was already in a definitive transformation.

4. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "NEW WAY" GAC IN DARABANI AND THE EFFORTS TO EXPAND COLLECTIVIZATION (1950–1961)

The Soviet occupation and the installation of the communist regime after the war made rural Romania uneasy about the future. The situation was no different in Darabani. Anxieties principally concerned collectivization based on the Soviet model. Says one Darabani peasant:

> When the Russians came here, there was this man whose name was C.P. The Russians went to him and asked: "Where did you get this land?" C.P. replied: "This is my land […] and it stretches from here to there." The man owned two strips of land [from the 1921 agrarian reform—D.D.]. Hearing this, the Russians said: "Oh, you have your own *kolkhoz*! If the communists come, you won't have anything any more!"[30]

Wartime anti-Soviet propaganda probably magnified the fear of collectivization, and even more so the fact that many of these peasants had fought on the Eastern

front, where they saw the realities of the Soviet villages and the miserable life of the Ukrainian and Russian peasants in the collectives. Many of them became prisoners of war and returned home after 1948 with an even greater aversion to collectivization, and they contributed to extensive (and it seems effective) anti-*kolkhoz* propaganda.[31]

Before they even encountered collectivization, Romanian peasants were burdened by the State's heavy requisitions. Beginning in 1946, these requisitions lasted through 1956, when the cereal quotas were lifted (a relief that the peasants attributed to the Hungarian Revolution), and 1962, which marked the end of the quotas for animals. Darabani peasants remember these as large scale, State-supported robbery. The agents of the State (*colectori*, or collectors) who applied the regulations were a daily presence in the village, and were recruited from the ranks of the marginalized. In general, they were people who only had a rudimentary education, and lacked both scruples and compassion (it was said of one that he had learned his behavior in the barnyard).[32] As was the case with collectivization, peasants believed the requisitions system originated in Russia, and perceived it as a way to force them to give up their land. Many said that they bore the requisitions in the hope that one day the situation would change. Most tried to avoid them by bribing officials and by declaring less land than they actually owned (this so-called "elasticity of land" became visible after 1989).[33]

The first GAC in Darabani was established in 1950. No one knows if it was of local inspiration, came from the district or was mandated by the center. However, official documents claim that a series of requests made by local peasants between the fall of 1949 and the spring of 1950 ultimately led to setting it up.[34] This event was part of the second stage of collectivization (February–June 1950—see Levy, this volume), and is officially dated to February 26, 1950. The peasant petitions are mentioned in a memo sent by the Darabani Provisional Committee to the Ministry of Agriculture [Department of Circulation of Goods], which indicated that six officials from the commune of Darabani were requesting approval to surrender their land as a contribution to the GAC "that was being established." This may indicate that preparation had begun much earlier, possibly in 1949.[35] At a March 16, 1950 general assembly, 76 Darabani peasants formally decided to launch the GAC *Drum Nou* [New Way].[36] A table with 67 signatures, and sets of nine people's fingerprints (proof of their total illiteracy), was placed in the "File for the constitution of a Darabani collective." Following this, the government approval for establishing and organizing the GAC came on April 14, 1950, by Resolution no. 393 of the Ministry of Agriculture, together with 19 other collectives.[37] This was the first GAC in Dorohoi county. In Northern Moldavia, the first GAC was established in the Roma *commune* (Botoşani county), as a punishment for a revolt in the summer of that year.[38]

A table of the 80 collective members of the first wave (an addition of four to the original 76) reveals the human components of the new GAC. Contrary to the regime's claims of gender equality, the founding members of the GAC were mostly men. They were aged 19 to 67 (11 were over 50, 23 between 40 and 50, 24

between 30 and 40, 13 between 20 and 30 and one under 20).[39] Most of the founding members had between zero and four years of schooling, and only two had seven years.[40] In terms of political affiliation, 38 were members of the Party, 22 of the Ploughman's Front, 12 in the Union of Democratic Women, two in the Youth Group and only six had no political affiliation.[41] Most of the founding members were politically affiliated to political organizations of the new regime. The importance of the Ploughman's Front, which had served in the past as a means of concealment and dislocation of previous peasant political alliances, diminished considerably and became negligible in the next decade. Under the heading "Political affiliation in the past," almost all had a blank, meaning they had been apolitical. Only one member of the GAC was remembered as a "liberal." The GAC chairman's political affiliation was identified as "with the government."[42] Of all the options, membership in the Communist Party would prove the most "profitable" type of political affiliation.[43]

In the early stage of collectivization, it was common for the first GAC members to be poor peasants, and the State gave substantial land endowments to make the GAC feasible. Darabani was no exception: in March 1950, the GAC leadership asked the Ministry of Agriculture to endow the new GAC with "the use of" 133.02 ha of land (12.56 ha from Bajura parish, 24.89 ha from Conceşti parish, 11.92 ha from Darabani parish, 19.02 ha from absentee landowners and 50.19 ha from donations).[44] On April 24, 1950, the Darabani Provisional Committee endowed the GAC with a house for its headquarters,[45] and 4 ha of land was taken from the village commons for other buildings (in exchange for this loss, the commune received 4.15 ha of land owned by *chiabur* Emil Costeanu).[46]

In June 1950, when the Government approved GAC *Drumul Nou*'s request for the 133.02 ha of land, the government resolution used the phrase "perpetual use" rather than "perpetual ownership."[47] This usage is a sign that new terminology had begun to capture land in a profound way in the State-controlled sectors. Because the acquired land was spread out in strips around the village, and the GAC could not have functioned without large fields, the authorities consolidated land by expropriating land belonging to 130 families (most of them politically unaffiliated middle peasants),[48] for a total of 200.21 ha; the former owners generally received land of much poor quality located far from the village, or even in neighboring communes.[49] The new GAC territory was more fertile ("the caviar of land," according to one villager), with good water and a central location.

Those who entered the GAC in 1950 were peasants with a precarious material position hoping to improve their situation, or opportunists who occupied leadership positions. Even with all the propaganda and privileges given collective members, the peasants in the area did not rush to contribute to the "socialist transformation of agriculture." Even though the members benefited from the best land, tax exemptions, privileges such as priority in cutting down trees or milling their grain (the region only had one mill and the waiting periods were long), apart from the "agitation work" of the authorities the quality of life did not change very much. Although the GAC members frequently received produce and other

items—honey, cheese, wool, etc.—they continued to appeal to their non-collectivized friends and relatives for help. My respondents interpreted this lack of prosperity as the result of the bad work ethic and the inferior skills of these first GAC members, who were stigmatized as "bad workers."[50]

Membership in the GAC fluctuated. Prior to 1962, the number was very low relative to the total number of Darabani inhabitants. In the spring of 1950, a table mentions 80 people,[51] in the fall of the same year there were 140 members, 148 members in 1951, 161 in 1952 and 1953, 141 in 1954, 126 in 1955, 113 in 1956 (note the decrease), 133 in 1957, 164 in 1958, 262 in 1960, and finally, 295 members in 1961.[52] Meanwhile, the size of the GAC land increased only slowly after 1950. A January 15, 1960 document notes that the size of GAC arable land was verified with "expeditious measurements" made using the plans drawn up in 1913 for an impending land reform. The results indicate the following: the land strips merged between 1950 and 1958 (the so-called "old perimeter") covered 304.32 ha, while land strips merged in 1959 (the "new perimeter") covered 160 ha. In January 1960, GAC *Drum Nou* Darabani had a total of 464.32 ha of land.[53]

In general, the peasants who joined the GAC before 1960 brought little land into it.[54] Sometimes, peasants would change their minds and withdraw, or would bring strips of bad land that were remote enough to make a merger with the GAC land difficult.[55] In 1957, a part of the GAC leadership opined that no new members should be admitted from among the ranks of government employees because the latter tended not to carry out their work assignments.[56] Also, despite the fact that new members were supposed to pay a sign-up fee, few complied with this requirement.[57] By 1958, most collectivized households came to own a cow and between 10 and 15 sheep. In the same year, the collective property consisted of 300 sheep, cows, oxen and horses (one animal per hectare not being indicative of the most extensive use of the available land) and 100 beehives.[58]

Participation in collective work could not be described as "enthusiastic." For example, during the summer of 1958, 95 percent of the workforce was present during the wheat threshing campaign (the year's average was 91 percent),[59] which suggests that work attendance was not satisfactory in previous years.[60] As for the members' pay, a 1957 official document indicates the following levels per workday: 8 kg of wheat, 1.5 kg of barley, 0.12 kg of cheese, 0.014 kg of wool, 0.2 kg of onions, 0.012 kg of honey, 9 kg of straw, 3 kg of hay and 2 *lei* in cash.[61] When compared with the remuneration members in other GACs received, the Darabani collectivized peasants were considerably worse off.[62] A saying from those years is telling: "In our GAC cheese rots away on plates; but if you don't have workpoints, not even the Devil will eat."[63]

Although good data on the quality of work done for "the first GAC" (formed in 1950) could not be reconstituted from the documents in the Darabani archives, informants were virtually unanimous in pointing out that collectivized peasants did not work very hard, and that despite the benefits offered by the regime (lower taxes, the best land in the village, etc.), and despite the propaganda spread about collectivization, GAC members had not prospered. At the same time, my respon-

dents acknowledged that after 1962, the early GAC members "did better" than the majority in the village.[64]

Given the Soviet origin of the collective farming applied in Romania, the regime borrowed extensively from Soviet expertise and presented the Soviet system as superior in all regards. Peasants were exposed to Soviet documentaries and posters about collectivization, as well as to media campaigns and conferences extolling Soviet-style collectivization. Propaganda materials included examples of I.V. Mikyurin-inspired "science," such as Soviet cows whose levels of milk output were unheard of (the case of a cow named Pashlushnitza from a *kolkhoz* in the Volga region was famous), crossbreeding between exotic and farm animals or between wheat seeds and their weeds, etc. Many of these examples can be found in the stories of my respondents, although inaccuracies make chronology difficult.[65] The popularization of propaganda narratives and images, which included successes of local GACs and TOZs, was typically carried out via conferences on collectivization organized in community centers, village radio loudspeakers, local newspapers, panel boards and the famous "red corner."[66]

Propaganda campaigns only succeeded in persuading the poor to enroll in the GAC. Formally, the poor were denied TOZ access because they did not have enough land to meet TOZ requirements, but in practice this predicament was overcome by government land donations. In order to "educate the working peasantry to apply agricultural and animal husbandry standards," Darabani authorities organized farming discussion groups in the Community Center or GAC headquarters, but attendance was generally low. Local teachers and Community Center directors actively participated in popularizing GAC and TOZ achievements, and if they neglected this "duty" the representatives of the regime criticized them harshly.[67]

In the early 1960s, the regime deployed collectivization propaganda to an unprecedented degree. All agitators went through intensive training, the number of conferences increased and "artistic shows" were organized on a larger scale. In February 1960, local agitators went through two days of training on the following topics: "the socialist transformation of agriculture, the state budget, the preparation and organization of farming campaigns." Also, between January 1 and August 1, 1960, Darabani saw no less than 110 conferences, 56 of which addressed agriculture-related topics. The pro-GAC/pro-TOZ propaganda teams consisted largely of teachers, and employees of the GAC and the People's Council. Party members typically led the teams, whose aim was to persuade peasants of the advantages of collective farming.[68]

The "art shows" hosted by the Community Centers included a play suggestively entitled "Doubt," a play staged in the Bajura Community Center, propaganda (usually in the form of staged drama, poetry recitation and singing) from art and agitprop brigades from Teioasa, Corneşti, the Darabani GAC and the Eşanca theater group. In addition to art forms of propaganda, regime agents also used "practical problems that reflected the superiority of the socialist sector." As for Darabani's five farming discussion groups and the two conference rounds organi-

zed by local authorities, records indicate that 350 peasants participated. Documents also note that keynote speakers at these conferences were often unprepared, a fact that entailed a general loss of confidence in their competence. Darabani also had 44 reading groups (one per electoral precinct) headed by local teachers. These reading groups would typically go over articles from the regional newspaper as well as from magazines like *Săteanca* [The Village Woman] and *Femeia* [The Woman], possibly indicative of the fact that the membership of these reading circles consisted mostly of the local women. The Darabani radio station also played an important role, as did the local panel boards.[69]

If local authorities were content with the level of mobilization in the villages administered by Darabani, mobilization in the commune center was an "unresolved" problem, despite the fact that it was there that most of the human and material resources were located.[70] Thus, an official document mentions that in 1960, the Darabani authorities could count on three choirs, six theater troupes, five dance teams, three agitprop brigades, 12 singers, 12 poem readers and an amateur folk music orchestra (*taraf*) with 9 artists. During the first months of 1960, Darabani saw 48 shows attended by 11,000 people. Statistically speaking, each inhabitant may be expected to have attended at least one show. Leaving aside the willing spectators (which were probably not very numerous), it would be reasonable to assume that the authorities mostly herded local employees, collective farm peasants, teachers and schoolchildren to these shows. Darabani authorities also noted, and were particularly angered by, the fact that the local youth usually failed to show up.

As a rule, the shows would feature regular songs, work songs and "revolutionary" songs with titles such as "The Party Flag," "Wealth and Light," "Great Country," "Our Party: Parent of Happiness," "The Dance of Collective Farm Peasants" and "The Wheat Ripens in the Summer." Theater groups performed in both the Darabani commune center and in its villages,[71] and featured plays on collectivization, patriotic education and the (Party-educated) New Man. The plays had titles such as "Doubt," "House in the Orchard" and "Platoon." Competitions (local and regional) were also arranged.[72] In addition to the work of artistic and "agitation" propaganda teams, authorities also deployed (at least on paper) intense visual propaganda using panel boards with photos and articles cut out from newspapers, posters and penny newspapers.[73] During the 1950s, Darabani authorities also appealed to rather childish "persuasion techniques" to attract peasants to the GACs, such as delivering impressive amounts of cereals to the homes of collectivized peasants with much pomp (in trucks with flags and music bands), in order to demonstrate their prosperity. Many of my respondents indicated that the effect of this was nil, as they could remember the same trucks returning at night to take the cereals away.[74]

With the exception of the effects of the land consolidation—the expropriation of good quality land situated close to the village, compensated with worse land situated further away from the village—all those interviewed indicated that those who submitted petitions for admission into the "first GAC" and other collective

forms generally did so of their own "free will," and without special pressures.[75] At the same time, however, the Party exerted close control nationwide over the activity of GACs.[76]

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, in addition to working on the establishment of GACs, Party activists focused on persuading as many peasants as possible to join TOZs.[77] Given the fact that peasants continued to work individually even after they became TOZ members, the activists sought to accustom peasants to working together, in groups. The fact that the TOZ was just a stage on the road to the GAC was well understood by the peasants who called the TOZ "the fiancée of the *kolkhoz*."[78] Consequently, peasants postponed joining even this form of "socialist" agriculture as long as they could. As a matter of fact, unlike in many neighboring communes, in Darabani a high percentage of peasants did not join TOZs. Instead, they were pushed straight into GACs in March 1962, following that month's violent and intense collectivization campaign.

5. MARCH 1962: FULL-SCALE COLLECTIVIZATION

In the late 1950s, the Party and State leadership seemed determined to complete collectivization in Romania.[79] The 3rd Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee (November 26–28, 1959) retrospectively proved to be one of the most important. On this occasion, the Party "decided both to resume industrialization and to increase the pace of the socialist transformation of the villages."[80] At the Third Party Congress (June 1960), First Party Secretary Gheorghiu-Dej reminded participants that the task laid out by the Party leadership at the Second Party Congress of ensuring the domination of the socialist sector in agriculture, in terms of both land ownership and production, had been not been fulfilled. He specified that the new six-year plan stipulated, as one of the basic policy targets, the "completion of collectivization of agriculture, as well as the development […] and the consolidation of the economic and organizational capacity of GACs." Gheorghiu-Dej admitted that about 680,000 families owning 1,800,000 ha of arable land were still outside the socialist sector, and that most of these families lived in mountainous regions. The First Secretary also estimated that the "socialist transformation of agriculture" could be completed "by 1965."[81] Finally, on December 22, 1961, Gheorghiu-Dej delivered a speech at the end of the Conference of Collectivized Farmers, in which he noted that at that moment GACs and TOZs owned "over 90 percent of the arable land" and that "if one does not count mountainous areas, only 700,000 hectares were left outside of the socialist sector." Once again, Gheorghiu-Dej anticipated that collectivization would be completed "prior to 1965."[82]

With its 2,884 households and 10,717 inhabitants, in 1958 Darabani was among the largest communes of Romania's northeast.[83] Two years later, Darabani was divided into nine villages, of which only six had an official "administrative" status. Thus, in 1960, Darabani had 3,095 families, of which 600 were headed by

landless workers and white-collar employees. The commune owned 10,543 ha of land, of which 8,930 ha were used for agriculture and 7,187 represented arable land. The situation of extramural land was distributed as follows: 4,804 hectares of non-collectivized land and 3,451 of collectivized land (as part of one GAC and six TOZs).[84]

5.1. The initial pace of collectivization

Although a GAC had existed in Darabani since 1950, by the early 1960s collectivization saw only modest progress in the commune. As shown above, the number of collectivized peasants fluctuated, yet it is clear that by 1961 it was very low relative to the total population of the commune.[85] In 1961, the village of Bajura saw the establishment of a GAC called "Hammer and Sickle."[86] The pace of collectivization increased in 1961, so that by the end of the year, 688 of the 2,790 families of Darabani had joined the GACs of Darabani and Bajura, bringing with them 1,492 ha, of a total land surface of 6,991 ha.[87] Employees of commune institutions and enterprises were also organized with a view to participating in the collectivization campaign.[88] According to a table dated January 19, 1962, up to that date the Darabani GACs managed to attract only the poor, the Party members, and local village representatives. What characterized these categories of villagers was that they owned little land or other property.[89]

Despite the mobilization and resolution of its staff, local authorities did not consider the progress of collectivization satisfactory in early 1962. On January 20, only 22.7 percent of Darabani families were collective members, a rate that local authorities saw as *entirely unsatisfactory* (author's emphasis). Some village representatives dispatched to the commune's center showed little interest in collectivization, whereas others showed no interest at all: "Institutions and enterprises in charge of sending their employees into the commune's villages […] to do collectivization work failed to perform this task successfully." At the same time, even when these teams would eventually attempt to do their part in the persuasion campaign, "their performance was sub-optimal, with many instances of failure to persuade at least one household to apply for GAC membership after one day of persuasion work." Local authorities concluded that this failure was due to the fact that they had sent only employees from the commune center, and ignored the potential propaganda role of Party members and inhabitants from the target villages who had applied for GAC membership. Consequently, communal authorities decided to reorganize the Darabani Executive Committee, and that "in order to achieve better results in the collectivization campaign and use the most appropriate methods to this end, the members of the Executive Committee were to do fieldwork in the villages they are responsible for."[90]

To spur the collectivization campaign, the Executive Committee of the Darabani People's Council began to call increasingly frequent meetings with its members, as well as with GAC and TOZ management. The sole topic on the agenda was "the campaign for the collectivization of agriculture and the economic and organizational strengthening of the GAC."[91] On January 22, 743 out of Darabani's

2,790 families joined the GAC with their 1,591 ha of land (out of commune's total of 6,991 ha). As in December 1961, official assessments of these results claimed that "*the results achieved so far are entirely unsatisfactory*" (author's emphasis). Consequently, the Council decided the following: (1) the chairman of the Executive Council would restructure the teams of People's Council employees and State enterprise employees involved in the collectivization campaign; (2) members of the Executive Council would go into every village to supervise the collectivization campaign, enlisting the inhabitants of these villages as propaganda agents; (3) employees involved in this operation would meet bi-weekly so that their work could be reviewed and assessed; (4) the number of propaganda events focused on collectivization in Darabani's Community Centers would increase in order to "*make citizens apply for GAC membership*" (author's emphasis); (5) members of the Executive Committee would control and guide the reading groups in their circumscriptions; and (6) members of the TOZ leadership would have to apply for GAC membership.[92]

Despite this new propaganda onslaught, the collectivization campaign remained stagnant.[93] This was also in defiance of the fact that the secretary of the Party Committee of the Darabani district was originally from Teioasa-Darabani, and visited the commune in late February 1962.[94] On February 28, Darabani authorities organized several meetings at the People's Council and in the presence of the aforementioned Party Secretary. If I were to use a popular journalistic expression of those times, these meetings brought peasants entering the collectives "a lovely gift for March 1: marriage with wealth."[95] In all, during the first two months of 1962, 232 families joined the GAC, bringing with them 440 ha of land.[96]

By comparison with the Botoşani district, the Dorohoi district displayed a smaller percentage of collectivized land and households, a variation for which we do not have an explanation.[97] A map dated March 4, 1952, entitled "The Progress of Collectivization in the Dorohoi District," contains the following information: of the thirty communes of the district, only two were completely collectivized (George Enescu and Horodiştea), 12 communes and the town of Dorohoi were at least half collectivized, and 16 communes had less than fifty percent of land and families in the GAC. Collectivization was the least advanced in the Broscăuți, Cândeşti, Lozna, Mihăileni, Pomârla and Darabani communes, the last being barely 29 percent collectivized. The map contains a brief criticism on the bottom: "the results of collectivization do not reflect the available potential […] It is necessary that Party and State organs organize more tours for working peasants at leading GACs as well as more meetings in order to persuade working peasants of the advantages of collectivization in their commune."[98]

5.2. Methods

> How should I put this: "Either I don't want to farm or I can't or…" This is what some said when they joined the GAC. Those who now say that they joined out of their own will were a bunch of lazybones. But those who pur-

> chased their land little by little felt a pain in their hearts when they submitted their entry petitions. Yes… they were forced, they wanted to avoid further beatings… The people who were in power back than were not kind people. They did not say to each other: "Wait, let's just talk to people and speak nicely with them." That's not what they said. Instead, they put in charge people with bludgeons. Yes, bludgeoners! You could call them that! They were nothing but bludgeoners! That's how it was!"[99]

The leadership of communist Romania attempted to mimic observance of the principle of "free consent" in collectivization campaigns during the 1949–1961 period. Even in 1962, the communist leadership claimed to observe this principle. As evidence, the Party invoked the fact that the regime did not formally confiscate land. Instead, it resorted to a large-scale mobilization of its apparatus between December 1961 and March 1962 in order to complete "the great event—collectivization." A propaganda document from 1965 notes the following: "The political efforts made by Party organs and organizations as well as by the ensemble of the Party cadres to persuade the peasantry constituted one of the largest political and organizational operations carried out by the Party. This mission saw the enthusiastic participation of state and Party cadres, agriculture engineers, animal husbandry experts, mechanics, teachers, and almost 500,000 collective farmers."[100]

The completion of collectivization in Darabani in early 1962 demanded the deployment of five different types of pressure: (1) economic (requisitions, consolidations and the sacking of public employees); (2) ideological (propaganda assaults); (3) violent (verbal and especially physical assaults); (4) familial (children were sent home from public schools, especially in 1962); and (5) rumors (such as that non-collectivized peasants could not find work, could not buy anything or could not leave their courtyards). Peasants tried to evade collectivization by hiding in the homes of relatives or friends, fleeing the village altogether, or taking shelter in the forest or in the field. Some returned to the village in ill health after a late snow proved too much to bear. In the end, intimidation—climaxing with violence—proved to be the principal instrument of collectivization.[101] The story goes that sometime in the 1970s or in the 1980s, a reporter visited the village of Flămânzi (Botoşani county) to interview peasants who remembered facts about the 1907 peasant revolt, which is said to have started in this village. When asked to describe the events, one of the aged peasants replied: "They beat us! They beat us! They beat us!" Hearing this, his wife interrupted him and said: "No, that happened during collectivization!" The story is a convincing illustration of the way in which collectivization was completed in northern Moldavia.

At the beginning of the 1960's, *gospodari* continued to be an example of success for the peasant class, and in March 1962, pressure was put on them to join the collective. Aware that *gospodari* were key to the completion of collectivization, local authorities began using force and psychological threats to force them into the GAC. In the words of a widespread demoralizing saying, "either you hang or

drown yourself, or you join the collective!"[102] Petitions to join the GAC registered before March 1962 can be found in a not-very-large file deposited in the Darabani Municipality Archives bearing the title "File containing petitions for membership in GAC Darabani, volume 1, 1950–1961." The file covers the villages of Mărgineni, Bombeni, Suseni, Corneşti and Locoviţa, from 1961 to early 1962.[103] In contrast, GAC membership petitions by Darabani peasants during the "big bang" of collectivization in the commune (March 1962) are bound in several larger files stored in the same archives. Petitions are organized by the village of residence of the applicant, and have dates in March 1962 (particularly March 14 and March 15). In general, the handwriting of the body of the petition and the signature differ: the often belabored, awkward signatures stand in sharp contrast with the adroit handwriting in the body of the petition. Consequently, one may infer that collectivization agents usually filled in the petitions. Most petitions were written on blank A4 sheets of paper, and only a few used templates. Each petition had four parts—the request to join the GAC; data on the family land and cattle; the number of family members able to work; and specific matters such as statements on the commitment to join the collective with the family cart, requests to harvest the wheat production of 1962 as a private farmer (see Lăţea, this volume), or requests from masons, other tradesman or old peasants not to have to work full-time in the GAC. Such attempts to sweeten the "pill" of collectivization were not unusual, and can be construed as forms of asymmetric negotiation with the regime.[104] Petitions ended with slogans typical for the period: "Long Live the Struggle for Peace!"; "Long Live Peace!"; "Long Live the People's Republic of Romania!"; "Long Live the RWP!"; and "We Fight for Peace!"[105]

The propaganda campaign staged by the Darabani authorities during the "big bang" stage of collectivization enjoyed extensive coverage the regional newspaper *Zori noi* (New Dawn), which was affiliated with the Suceava Regional Committee and the Regional People's Council. The frequent reports in *Zori noi* on collectivization in Darabani were dispatched by one C. B., who was the "voluntary correspondent" of that newspaper in 1962, as well as the secretary of RWP Darabani.[106] His articles were remarkably frequent for a collaborator, and his role has already been highlighted in this chapter.[107]

In general, propaganda activities were more frequent on Sundays, and were carried out simultaneously in Darabani commune and in its affiliated villages. Propaganda "artists" from the local Community Center and the GAC's "red corner" would perform in the morning at the Center (then called "People's Light"), and then stage "shows" in neighboring villages. The propaganda art shows were preceded by speeches delivered by collectivized farmers or by members of the Party and Communist Youth, in which the problems of working in the GAC and the level of incomes earned loomed large. After the speeches, the audience was entertained with propaganda plays and allowed to ask questions (all of which may have been staged).[108] Authorities would also summon "people's meetings" in all Darabani villages, during which peasants were urged to join the GAC.[109]

My respondents confirmed this large-scale mobilization for collectivization via propaganda art shows, documentary films and dance shows, as well as folk music shows featuring famous singers from northern Moldavia, such as Vasile Canănău, Angela Moldovan and Maria Bararu.[110] The fact that folk music stars were enlisted in the propaganda effort was not surprising, given the scale of mobilization to complete the campaign. It may be important to point out that, much like sports teams, popular artists had already been regimented into the music ensembles of the Ministry of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior. The available evidence proves that one of the mentioned folk singers belonged to a Ministry of the Interior ensemble.[111]

Both archival documents and interviews confirmed that, until March 1962, collectivization in Darabani was carried out with local human resources. These included Party members, village representatives, People's Council and government employees (only in interview data). Even the Orthodox priest from Bajura was enlisted, even though he had previously been imprisoned by the regime ("recycling" the representatives of the old order for the needs of the new order was not uncommon under communism). By contrast, most respondents concur that in March 1962, Darabani commune and its affiliated villages saw great numbers of strangers from villages that were relatively close (30–35 km) to Darabani. These included Rădăuți Prut, Miorcani, Oroftiana, Păltiniş, Coțuşca, Hudeşti and Conceşti. They also came from more remote regions, such as the Câmpulung-Dorna area, the mountainous area of Suceava, the city of Suceava itself, Iaşi, and in the case of a *Securitate* captain, even Bucharest.[112] The available archival documents do not offer much information about the presence of strangers in Darabani. The minutes of a March 22, 1962 meeting on defining the borders of GAC Bajura and GAC Darabani confirm that in addition to local authorities, the management of the two GACs and local agriculture experts, also attending were an engineer sent by the People's Council of Bucharest and two employees of the Botoşani Center for the Prevention of Soil Erosion.[113] It is quite likely that the three strangers had worked in collectivization in Darabani during the first two weeks of March 1962 and later in the organization of the collectives.

5.3. "The Road to a New Life" or (un)successful collectivization

> Priest N.A. (March 1962): "Come on, Mr. Costică, come on Mr. Vasile, let us all go this way, for it is the right way! Do you have a choice? You can't turn left, you can't turn right. This is the path, the path of communism, where all live equal and there are no more rich and poor people. We will all be equal!"
>
> Party activist D.T. (after March 1962): "Tomorrow morning you will see the *Securitate* at your door! This is the way, this is the path! Don't try to avoid it, don't try to bypass it! You don't stand a chance! No exceptions *whatsoever*!"[114]

Why did the Darabani peasants yield to pressure in March 1962? The crucial variables are the unprecedented increase in the mobilization of Party and State authorities and their use of persuasion and terror, with a clear prevalence of the latter. People were threatened; beaten in their own homes, in the People's Council or in Party, Securitate and police headquarters; blackmailed with the loss of their jobs or the expulsion of their children from public schools (especially from high schools). Rumors were spread of the complete social isolation of those who refused to sign up for the "new way" (they would be barred from work, from buying things or from leaving their courtyards etc.). Indeed, fear of social ostracism, of being alone as most others entered the GAC recurs in many accounts about the end of resistance: "What happened to others would happen to me, too!" or "Why should I be different?"[115]

Silent resistance had been possible during the previous period, when the State had not yet mobilized its entire arsenal. Additionally, peasants refused to work together with individuals whom they scorned, while continually hoping that the situation would change and that their resistance could delay things until there was a major political transformation, which was typically believed involve foreign intervention ("The Americans are coming!"). For years, peasants earnestly cultivated this hope, and it was with this hope in mind that they put up with endless humiliations and ruinous requisitions. But these hopes died little by little. Officially, on March 16, 1962, collectivization was completed in Darabani. In mid April, the Executive Committee of the Darabani People's Council employed triumphalist rhetoric when it declared collectivization a success: "After seeing the successes of GACs, the fact that GACs could boast increased agricultural output and better living standards for its members, the large peasant masses became convinced that the way shown to them by the Party is the way to a new life, to wealth and happiness."

The official statistics of the end of collectivization in Darabani are self-explanatory. The commune was 99.66 percent collectivized, and its three GACs incorporated 3,204 families and 7,703 ha of land. The wealth and capacities of the three GACs were distributed as follows. GAC *Drum Nou* (New Way) Darabani was the largest and also the oldest; it included the villages of Darabani, Corneşti, Eşanca and Lişmănița, with their 2,042 families and 5,044 ha of land, and had 14 work "brigades" and 91 work teams.[116] GAC *Secerea şi Ciocanul* (Hammer and Sickle) was established in 1961. It incorporated the village of Bajura, and had 580 families, 1,467 ha of land, four work brigades and 21 work teams. Finally, GAC Teioasa, incorporated in 1962, had 582 families, 1,252 ha of land, four work brigades and 28 work teams.[117]

In general, complete collectivization was achieved by a combination of persuasion and coercion (the policy of carrot and the stick). Only a few peasants continued their resistance after March 1962, and would face continual harassment in the coming decades. They were forced to trade their strips of land with GAC strips located in other villages, their animals were requisitioned or killed, they were fined for minor or spurious offenses, they were denied jobs in the state sector

(only a few finally managed to get them), their children were expelled from high school, etc.[118] Some admired them for their courage, others thought that suffering and social marginalization for themselves and for their children was too high a price to pay.

In the rest of Suceava region, collectivization also progressed at a fast pace in the first half of March 1962. According to official statistics, 76,200 families owning 157,710 ha of land joined GACs over a period of two weeks.[119] Authorities declared collectivization complete in the Dorohoi district on March 17, 1962. The district now boasted 83 GACs with 41,731 families and 103,737 ha of land.[120] On March 18, 1962, the leadership of the Suceava region reported to the Central Committee that collectivization was completed in the region, which now had 376 GACs with 204,156 families and 473,183 ha.[121]

After 13 years of effort, the regime could finally declare collectivization a success and make Darabani a part of "socialist agriculture." To celebrate, the Central Committee organized a plenary meeting in Bucharest and invited 11,000 peasants to attend (the figure of 11,000 was chosen, according to communist propaganda, to symbolize the 11,000 peasants killed during the 1907 peasant riot). On April 27, 1962, Gheorghiu-Dej read his famous Report to the Grand National Assembly, in which he announced that "collectivization is complete; in the cities and villages of People's Republic of Romania, socialism has definitively triumphed."[122] According to Dumitru Popescu, former communist dignitary who saw his political heyday from the 1960s to the 1980s, First Secretary Gheorghiu-Dej often repeated to his close circle certain phrases that remained unchanged:

> Now, I am the landlord and the *chiabur*. Here, in my watch pocket, I hold the key to warehouses of cereal! I hold the entire harvest in my hand. And it is I who decide how to divide it.[123]

Dej was partially right to declare collectivization fully complete in April 1962. The peasants of Romania, not only those in Moldova, had not been able to avoid the *kolkhoz*. As to death, from this neither the dictator nor the collective farms escaped, even if death came three decades later. In retrospect, collectivization proved to be, in Alain Besançon's words, a "revolutionary turbulence."[124] In the memory of my respondents, however, collectivization meant dispossession, low-quality work and even encouragement *not* to work, the diminution of correctness and responsibility to near nonexistence, dependence on the State, the emergence of a social group that controlled agriculture even after 1989, the absence of a sense of justice and the perpetuation of injustice. The collective farm in Darabani was never a success. It was unloved by the peasants, best evidence of this being its rapid disintegration after 1989, when the peasants took back their old lands. Thirty years of collective farming may have perverted the peasantry's ethics, but not their sense of property.

Translated from Romanian by Cornel Ban and Linda Miller

NOTES

1 During my teenage years I attributed late collectivization to peasant resistance. Peasant resistance was important, of course, but this hypothesis is not absolute.

2 In 2002–2003, when I conducted research for this paper, archival work in Bucharest and in the provinces was difficult for researchers. For example, when I approached the Suceava county branch of Romanian National Archives (DJAN), the archive staff was very friendly. Yet when I asked for collections that were of interest for my research (i.e., collections on the Suceava People's Council, the Party Committee of the Suceava county, the Suceava Agriculture Division, etc.), the same staff turned me down arguing that those respective collections were not inventoried due to a shortage of archival shelves. Their defense was plausible, given that some of the staff had their desks in the reading room. But the most plausible reason why access to archival material remains difficult is that Suceava county and Moldavia, in general, is the bastion of Romania's communist successor party. Many of these party leaders and affiliated businessmen have roots in Romania's recent political past, and are therefore directly interested in blocking access to archives. At the same time, archive workers in Suceava claim that the "Party Committee of the Suceava Region" collection is the second largest archival collection in the country after the "Central Committee of the RWP" collection. More recently, this situation has changed. It is my conviction that nowadays, due to the recent policy changes implemented in the National Archives of Romania, researchers' access to the archives of the Romanian Communist Party is free, equal and unconditional. In addition, sustained efforts are being made to classify and offer for research all archival holdings that are of interests for students of Romania's recent past.

3 Darabani does not have a published history, but there are several unpublished ones. The most important, detailed and well documented unpublished history was authored in 1937 by lawyer Emil Costeanu, *Din trecutul Darabanilor* (unpublished manuscript, 1937). At the beginning of the 1970s, Costeanu wrote a shorter history, *Monografia localității Darabani* (unpublished manuscript). Other unpublished histories of Darabani include the following: Cezar Vasilescu, *Monografia comunei Darabani* (unpublished manuscript, circa 1925); Gheorghe Gârneață, *Din monografia comunei Darabani, 1942–1946*, (112 pages); Neculai Amălinei, *Monografie* [*Bajura*] (can be dated to the 1960s or 1970s and has 26 pages); *Istorie. Monografia oraşului Darabani* (can be dated to the 1970s and has 76 pages). For information on Conceşti, a village incorporated in Darabani commune until 1956, see Gheorghe C. Covatariu, *Monografia comunei Conceşti, județul Botoşani* (unpublished manuscript, 1969, 59 pages). I thank Victor Teişanu and Dumitru Haha, two amateur historians of the regions, for giving me the opportunity to study these histories.

4 Sabin Manuilă, *Recensământul General al Populației din 29 decemvrie 1930,* vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Central de Statistică, 1938), 90, 178.

5 *Recensământul populației din 21 februarie 1956. Structura demografică a populației. Numărul şi repartizarea teritorială a populației; starea civilă; naționalitate, limbă maternă; nivel de instruire; familii* (Bucharest: Direcția Centrală de Statistică, 1956), 134.

6 See Katherine Verdery's chapter in this volume.

7 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfatul popular al comunei Darabani" (in what follows Sfat. pop. com. Darabani), file 9/1951, 49–51.

8 Interview with G.D., 71 years old, male, farmer, former middle peasant, January 21, 2001.

9 Interviews with M.D.D., 69 years old, male, farmer, former chiabur, July 15, 1997 and January 17, 2001.
10 Interviews with M.D.D., July 15, 1997 and January 17, 2001.
11 Interview with V.D.A., 70 years old, male, farmer, former middle peasant, January 19, 2001; Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001; Interview with G.D.B., 72, male, farmer, former middle peasant, March 3, 2001; Interview with D.I.P., 70 years old, male, farmer, former middle peasant and team supervisor, March 3, 2001, etc.
12 Interview with M.A., 82 years old, male, "middle peasant on the way to being chiabur," former chairman of GAC Darabani, January 23, 2001.
13 "Rezoluția şedinței plenare a CC al PMR din 3–5 martie 1949 asupra sarcinilor partidului în lupta pentru întărirea alianței clasei muncitoare cu țărănimea muncitoare şi pentru transformarea socialistă a agriculturii," in *Rezoluții şi hotărâri ale Comitetului Central al Partidului Muncitoresc Român*, 2nd ed., vol. 1: *1948–1950* (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Politică, 1952), 95. See also Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole şi cuvântări* (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Politică, 1953), 261.
14 This is in place of *săraci,* the usual word for the poor.
15 Interview with C.S.C., 68 years old, male, farmer, former chiabur, January 18, 2001; Interview with V.T.T., 77 years old, male, farmer, former middle peasant and chiabur son, January 18, 2001.
16 Interview with C.I.D., 81 years old, male, farmer, January 22, 2001.
17 Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001.
18 Interview with V.T.T., January 18, 2001.
19 Interview with V.T.T., January 18, 2001.
20 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1960, 9–10.
21 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 1/1961, "Table of employees of the Darabani People's Council," 23–25.
22 Interviews with G.D., January 21, 2001 and M.D.D, July 15, 1997 and January 21, 2001; Interview with V.T., 50 years old, male, writer, son of a middle-peasant, December 7, 2000. See also DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1958, 23.
23 Interview with M.A., January 23, 2001.
24 Interview with M.V.I., 72 years old, man, farmer, middle peasant, former president of the Bajura GAC, January 18, 2001. Interview with D.H., 48 years old, man, former accountant at the Bajura GAC, January 16, 2001.
25 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 7/1960, 262.
26 Interview with I.F., 78 years old, man, farmer, son of a *chiabur*, did not join the GAC, January 21, 2001. Interview with M.D.S., 75 years old, man, farmer, middle-peasant, former collector, January 21, 2001.
27 Interview with M.D.D., July 15, 1997 and January 17, 2001.
28 Interview with C.S.C., January 18, 2001.
29 Interview with G.D.B., March 3, 2001. Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001.
30 Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001.
31 Interview with D.V.H., 76 years old, man, farmer, middle peasant, former president of the Corneşti GAC, January 20, 2001. Interview with I.G.A., 72 years old, male, farmer, middle peasant, former president of the Eşanca GAC, January 19, 2001. Interview with M.I.D., 86 years old, man, farmer, middle peasant, January 24, 2001.
32 Interviews with M.D.D., July 15, 1997 and January 17, 2001. Interview with G.D.B., March 3, 2001. Interviews with G.D., January 21, 2001.

33 See Katherine Verdery, *Socialismul: ce a fost, şi ce urmează* (Iaşi: Editura Institutului European, 2002), 197–258.
34 ANIC, Fond "CC al PCR-Cancelarie," file 59/1950, 7. See Robert Levy's study in this volume.
35 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 13b.
36 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 5–7.
37 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 1. See also Gheorghe Iancu, Virgiliu Țârău, and Ottmar Traşcă, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Aspecte legislative, 1945–1962* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000), 112.
38 See Dorin Dobrincu, "Transformarea socialistă a agriculturii, răscoalele țărăneşti şi deportările din nordul Moldovei (1949)," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol*, XXXIX-XL (2002–2003), 459–487.
39 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 37.
40 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 37.
41 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 37.
42 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 37.
43 Interview with G.D.B., March 3, 2001. Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001.
44 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 2. The Darabani Provisional Committee also asked the Ministry of Agriculture on April 6, 1950 that the land confiscated from parishes and "absentee" farmers be transferred to the *Drumul Nou* GAC in Darabani. See, in this respect, Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 12.
45 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 13d.
46 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 13a. Emil Costeanu had been a Liberal lawyer, author of a monograph of the commune (unpublished manuscript).
47 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 11.
48 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 21.
49 Interview with C.G.S., 51 years old, man, farmer, son of a middle peasant, did not join the GAC, July 16, 1997. Interview with V.T.T., January 18, 2001.
50 Interview with M.B., 73 years old, man, farmer, middle peasant, did not join the GAC, January 20, 2001. Interview with V.D.A., 70 years old, man, farmer, middle peasant, January 19, 2001.
51 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "Constituirea CAP Darabani," 37.
52 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file without title; "Dosar cu situația pe 1950–1961 a zilelor muncite în GAC de colectivişti," no page numbers. In the "Tabel nominal cu membri GAC com. Darabani la data de 1.01.1956," there were only 20 persons mentioned (DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 6/1956, 109). I do not have an explanation for this figure that does not match the statistical records of the Darabani Town Hall. Nonetheless, this figure seems to correspond to what my interviewees recalled.
53 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file Constituirea CAP Darabani, 63.
54 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1956, 299.
55 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1956, 300.
56 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1956.
57 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1956, 301.
58 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1956, 468, 482.
59 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 1/1956, 156–160.

60 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 1/1956, 296–298.
61 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 1/1956, 156–160.
62 See Călin Goina's study in this volume.
63 Interview with G.D.B., March 3, 2001.
64 Interview with D.S., 82 years old, male, farmer, middle peasant, January 25, 2001; interview with C.I.D., January 22, 2001; interview with G.D., January 21, 2001; interview with G.D.B., March 3, 2001; interview with M.I.D., January 24, 2001.
65 Interview with C.S.C., January 18, 2001; interview with D.H., January 16, 2001. Most interviewees recalled the extraordinary propaganda efforts undertaken by authorities.
66 DJAN Botoşani, fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1956, 319, 483; file 8/1960, 72; file 8/1961, 14–16, 27. The "red corner" was a form of political propaganda amply used by communist authorities, a place where official posters, statistics and news praising the achievement of the regime were displayed, as well as pamphlets and caricatures demonizing class enemies or criticizing certain workers' lack of enthusiasm.
67 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1956, 470–471.
68 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 7/1960, 200.
69 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 7/1960, 201–202.
70 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 7/1960, 2002.
71 Interview with C.S.C., January 18, 2001.
72 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 7/1960, 203–204.
73 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 7/1960, 204–205.
74 Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001. Interview with D.V.H., January 20, 2001. Interview with I.D., 80 years old, woman, farmer, middle peasant, January 24, 2001.
75 Interview with G.I.P., January 19, 2001. Interview with M.I.D., January 24, 2001. Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001. Interview with C.S.C. January 18, 2001.
76 Marin, *In serviciul*, 185.
77 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 8/1960, 71; file 8/1961, 14–15, 17.
78 Interview with D.D., 62 years old, woman, farmer, middle peasant, December 2000–March 2001.
79 Marin, *In serviciul*, 109.
80 Ghiță Ionescu, *Comunismul în România* (Bucharest: Litera, 1994), 335.
81 "Raportul CC al PMR cu privire la activitatea partidului în perioada dintre Congresul al II-lea şi Congresul al III-lea al partidului, cu privire la planul de dezvoltare a economiei naționale pe anii 1960–1965 şi la schița planului economic de perspectivă pe 15 ani," in Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. *Articole şi cuvântări, august 1959–mai 1961* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1961), 96–199.
82 "Cuvântarea rostită la încheierea Consfătuirii pe țară a țăranilor colectivişti," in Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole şi cuvântări, iunie 1961–decembrie 1962* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1962), 233–234. See also Dorin Dobrincu, "Încheierea colectivizării în România. Ultimul asalt împotriva țărănimii," *Analele Sighet*, vol. 8 (2001), 191–197.
83 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 9/1958, 112–113.
84 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 7/1960, 262.
85 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 3/1962, 2–3.
86 *Buletinul Oficial*, 252, March 1, 1949. See also Iancu, et. al, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii*, 101.
87 These figures are slightly contradictory, due to the territorial reorganization that took place in 1960.
88 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 3/1962, 2–3.

89 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 3/1962, 4.
90 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 3/1962, 3.
91 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 3/1962, 7, 12.
92 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 3/1962, 5–6.
93 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 4/1962, 18.
94 Interview with M.A., January 23, 2001. Multiple interviews with G.D., December 2000–March 2003.
95 On March 1, many Romanians send small tokens of affection to their friends, family and colleagues (translator's note).
96 "S-au înscris în GAC," *Zori noi*, no. 4426 (March 2, 1962), 1.
97 "Mersul colectivizării în raionul Botoşani," *Zori noi*, no. 4427 (March 3, 1962), 1.
98 "Mersul colectivizării în raionul Dorohoi," *Zori noi*, no. 4428 (March 4, 1962), 1. Bosanci, a commune in the Suceava area that has been famous for its restive population, had on March 6, 1962 the lowest collectivization rate in the whole region, with only 5.44% of its inhabitants having joined a GAC. The authorities were extremely unhappy about this situation and stepped up measures to "persuade" peasants to join the GAC. "Mersul colectivizării în comunele din raza oraşului Suceava," *Zori noi*, no. 4429 (March 6, 1962), 1.
99 Interview with V.D.A., January 19, 2001.
100 Nicolae Giosan, Bucur Şchiopu and David Davidescu, eds., *Agricultura României, 1944–1964* (Bucharest: Editura Agro-Silvică, 1965), 52.
101 Interview with H.P., 74 years old, male, farmer, middle peasant, did not join the GAC, July 13, 1997. Interview with I.T.S., 87 years old, male, farmer, middle peasant, did not join the GAC, July 15, 1997. Interview with I.G.S., 72 years old, male, farmer, middle peasant, did not join the GAC, July 13, 1997. Interview with C.G.S., July 16, 1997. Interview with A.A., 39 years old, male, mechanic, January 18, 2001. Almost all my respondents mentioned the large-scale use of violence during collectivization. Some persons whom I wanted to interview had such salient memories about the repression they were subject to that they refused to be interviewed, claiming that history "can roll back." Others warned me to stop my investigations—"you're young"—and to watch out for trouble, hinting to possible reprisals from the institutionalized heirs of the communist regime.
102 Interview with O.C.T., 44 years old, male, teacher, son of a middle peasant, January 19, 2001.
103 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, "Dosar cereri de înscriere în GAC Darabani," vol. I, 1950–1961, no pages available.
104 The concept was suggested by Daniel Lățea, see his study in this volume.
105 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, "Dosar cu cereri de înscriere în GAC Darabani, satul Suseni," no pages avaliable. Requests in other archives were very similar: "Dosar cereri de înscriere în GAC Darabani, satul Bombeni"; "Dosar cereri de înscriere în GAC Darabani, satul Corneşti," vol. 4, 1962; "Dosar cereri de înscriere în GAC Darabani, satul Eşanca;" "Dosar cereri de înscriere în GAC Darabani, satul Locoviţa."
106 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 9/1958, 89(f).
107 See C. Barbacaru, "Zi de duminică la Darabani," *Zori noi*, no. 4426 (March 2, 1962), 1; "Fraţii," no. 4432 (March 9, 1962), 1; "I-au convins faptele," no. 4433 (March 10, 1962), 1.
108 See C. Barbacaru, "Zi de duminică la Darabani," *Zori noi*, no. 4426 (March 2, 1962), 1.

109 "Păşesc în marea familie a colectiviştilor," *Zori noi*, no. 4427 (March 3, 1962), 1.

110 Interview with T.L., 77 years old, male, former economist at the Darabani People's Council, March 1, 2001. Interview with P.P.Z., 74, male, former Pentecostal minister, February 28, 2001. Interview with M.D.S., January 21, 2001.

111 "Valori artistice-Angela Moldovan," *Civica*, I (November 2000) 1, 24.

112 Interview with I.F., January 21, 2001. Interview with H.P., 74 years old, male, farmer, middle peasant, did not join the GAC, July 13, 1997. Interview with I.T.S., July 15, 1997. Interview with I.G.S., July 13, 1997. Interview with C.G.S., July 16, 1997. Interview with V.T.T., January 18, 2001. Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001. Interview with G.D.B, March 3, 2001. Interview with T.L., March 1, 2001.

113 Arhiva Primăriei Darabani, file "CAP Bajura," n.p.

114 Interview with C.S.C., January 18, 2001.

115 Interview with D.I.P., March 3, 2001. Interview with G.D., January 21, 2001. Interview with M.V.I., January 18, 2001. Interview with V.T.T., January 18, 2001. Interview with D.V.H., January 20, 2001.

116 Both the work teams and the work brigades were organized as "work units." With its 15, 20, or 25 members, the work team was the smaller unit, while work brigades were the biggest units. A brigade would incorporate several teams. Typically, a GAC had several work brigades. These were often called "field brigades" in order to distinguish them from the GAC units specialized in animal husbandry and construction work.

117 DJAN Botoşani, Fond "Sfat. pop. com. Darabani," file 3/1962, 34–36.

118 Interview with I.T.S., July 15, 197. Interview with I.F., January 21, 2001.

119 "Mersul colectivizării în regiunea noastră," *Zori noi*, no. 4438 (March 16, 1962), 1.

120 "În raioanele Dorohoi, Fălticeni, Gura Humorului, Rădăuţi şi în comunele subordonate oraşului Suceava s-a încheiat colectivizarea agriculturii," *Zori noi*, no. 4439 (March 17, 1962), 1; "În raioanele Dorohoi, Fălticeni şi Gura Humorului, regiunea Suceava, s-a încheiat colectivizarea agriculturii," *Scînteia*, no. 5470 (March 17, 1962), 1.

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122 "Raport cu privire la încheierea colectivizării şi reorganizării conducerii agriculturii prezentat la Sesiunea extraordinară a Marii Adunări Naţionale," in Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole şi cuvântări, iunie 1961–decembrie 1962* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1962), 286.

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Exploiters Old and New: Making and Unmaking "Rich Peasants" in Aurel Vlaicu (Hunedoara Region)

KATHERINE VERDERY

The relationship between peasants and the state has long been a central topic in analyzing agrarian societies, such as Romania's in the first half of the twentieth century.[1] Important elements in this relationship include the balance of political forces in the state (understood as a collection of groupings having potentially different agendas); the state's capacity for surveillance, the degree to which it could penetrate rural areas, and its technologies of rule (such as taxation, subsidies or denunciations); the intermediate groups that affect how peasants connect with the state; the state's dependence on peasant production of food; and the resources available to peasants to fend off or evade the state's initiatives toward them. In the history of modern Romania's relations with its peasants, these elements have changed decisively several times—with the end of serfdom, the creation of Greater Romania after 1918, the communist take-over in 1945–47 and the end of communist rule in 1989. This paper concerns the third of these: changes in peasant-state relations after the communist take-over, through the collectivization of agriculture.

Following World War II, the new government that emerged under the Soviet-backed Romanian Workers Party (RWP) aimed to establish a relationship with the peasantry that was more intrusive and more intimate than any prior regime. It would not stop at the techniques of taxation, increased dependence on markets, and occasional subsidies to agriculture—typical of the interwar period. Instead, the Party-State would seek to insinuate itself directly into rural communities and even into families, breaking down existing social relationships and creating wholly new alliances and enmities between newly formed groups while completely refashioning villagers' sense of who they were. The prevailing kinship relations through which village social life had been organized (including fictive kinship) were to be replaced by "class struggle," intended to usher in a new social order based in collective ownership and group labor. The means for accomplishing this was to be collectivization. That policy would be essential to forming the "new socialist man" by eliminating "traditionalism" in the rural sector and subjecting the peasantry to intensive surveillance.[2] In addition, it would enable the regime to establish greater control over the food supply, so as to promote industrial devel-

opment by holding down food prices and forcing surpluses out of agriculture toward industry, as well as to ensure a proletarianized labor force from villages as industry developed. Collectivization was therefore crucial to several aspects of the Party's plans, and it was an enormous task that would radically disrupt the way of life of the 75 percent of Romania's population who lived in villages.

The apparatus of communist rule in Romania, however, was still in the process of consolidating itself and forming the cadres upon whose actions it would depend. Given the resources available to it at that time, collectivization would depend entirely on the actions of local cadres, as the center could not effectively oversee such a far-reaching a policy.[3] There were approximately 1,000 Party members in 1944, and a speedy increase to 710,000 members a mere three years later indicates primarily that many of those people were "communists" in name only.[4] Despite the presence of Soviet advisors, the new regime was not sufficiently well entrenched to control the behavior of thousands of new activists. Most were little schooled in the ideas and practices of Soviet-style communism, yet it would be their job to turn life upside-down for some 12 million villagers. Thus, collectivization, so crucial to successfully creating a Communist Romania, would be based on the interaction between a barely controllable mass of activists and the Party center, itself riven with factional conflicts and subject to orders from the Soviet Union. Simply from a structural point of view, collectivization was implemented against great odds.

What can we learn from collectivization about the peasant-state relationship the communists hoped to introduce? Through what techniques did local cadres attempt the tremendous task of reordering the countryside, and to what extent were they bound by central directives? How did peasants react to the new criteria of social conformity handed down from above? My paper offers preliminary conclusions to these kinds of questions, paying special attention to the Party's use of the notion of "class struggle"—particularly, the practice of making and unmaking "rich peasants," or *chiaburi*, processes I refer to as "*chiaburization*" and "declassification."[5] I also follow the divergent interpretations of these criteria by local authorities in the process of *chiaburization* and the dialogic nature of the new peasant-state relationship, most evident in how peasants internalized the criteria and attempted to manipulate them through the process of filing petitions.

A variant of Soviet practice concerning the *chiaburi*, chiaburization was fundamental to both destroying village traditions and promoting the formation of collectives. To prepare communities to accept collectives, cadres created a new classification system containing three categories—*săraci* (poor), *mijlocaşi* (middle), and *chiaburi* (wealthy or exploiters), paralleling the earlier poor, middle, and rich peasants of village stratification. The intention was to support the poor and attempt to ally the middle peasants with them by demonizing and punishing those defined as exploiters, or *chiaburi*.[6] The Party expected resistance, which it chose to anticipate by establishing a category of people likely to resist the consolidation of the Party-State and then projecting that category onto all potential sources of

resistance. Cadres overcame that resistance by gradually annihilating *chiaburi* through exorbitant taxes and quotas, arbitrary arrests, land confiscations and physical violence.[7]

The Turkish root of the term "*chiabur*" (pronounced kyah-boor) means "good farmer." It was quintessentially a label, a weapon, a tactic in battle, rather than referring to actual characteristics of actual persons. It could be applied to all kinds of people, the point being to create examples, attribute resistance to them (such as sabotaging equipment, withholding grain, counterrevolutionary intentions, etc.), and punish them for it. Some people labeled *chiaburi* may indeed have done the things they were accused of doing, or had the characteristics they were accused of having, but many did not. Moreover, the category's fuzzy boundaries—there was never certainty as to what, exactly, separated a *chiabur* from a middle peasant—made it possible for people to be moved in and out of *chiabur* status. These possibilities for changing people's category informed the frequent use of the expression "unmasking" with respect to *chiaburi*. Traditional village social organization, as well as lack of vigilance by local authorities, might enable *chiaburi* to "hide" in the category of middle peasants; later, authorities or their fellow villagers might "unmask" them, returning them to the ranks of *chiaburi*. Alternatively, once local cadres began to realize that villagers were more likely to join GACs if *chiaburi* also joined them, then the category "middle peasant" would open up its embrace.[8]

Such moves might accompany policy shifts in Bucharest or Moscow, like the kinds discussed in Levy's and Oprea's papers, or might respond to the exigencies of local circumstances. Conflicts over the proper treatment of *chiaburi* were central to the larger conflict between Ana Pauker and Gheorghiu-Dej; massive declassification might happen wherever harsh treatment of *chiaburi* made poor peasants sympathetic to their plight, thereby impeding the class struggle;[9] cadres might speed up chiaburization to draw attention away from their failures on other matters;[10] and some local officials might press for declassification (even while others made new *chiaburi*) for entirely personal reasons. The subject of *chiaburi*, then, is an excellent indicator of larger policy shifts as well as of local relations, actions, and events. The topic's intrinsic fascination is marred only by the great individual suffering of those upon whom the label was cast.

I draw my observations on the processes of chiaburization and declassification from the community of Aurel Vlaicu in Transylvania, where I have conducted research since 1973. Instead of describing the process of collectivization in Vlaicu in a manner similar to that of other papers in this volume, I will use the matter of *chiaburi* to raise issues of a broader kind. Although one case study is insufficient for answering the kinds of questions I pose, this case is useful for illustrating how a mix of ethnographic interviews and archival research enriches our understanding of collectivization.

1. THE COMMUNITY OF AUREL VLAICU[11]

The village of Aurel Vlaicu (birthplace of Romania's famous aviator of that name) is located in the floodplain of the Mureş river, in an area known as "Field of Bread" (Câmpul Pâinii) near the foothills of the Western Carpathians. Its soils are relatively fertile (for Transylvania), and the main farming activities have long been the cultivation of wheat and corn, used to raise cattle and pigs. The population was about 750 in 1956, rising to 915 in 1992. In 1893–1896 the village acquired some Swabian Germans, who colonized bankrupt noble estates. They constituted 20 percent of the population in 1910, declining to 17 percent in 1948 (and to only 3 percent in 1992). Romanians in Vlaicu were Orthodox, and Germans were Lutheran. At the time of the 1948 census, Vlaicu comprised an area of about 1,200 ha, some 900 of which was arable.[12] Administratively, during collectivization Vlaicu was part of Şibot commune, Orăştie district, in the Hunedoara region (following a brief period in which it had been its own commune).[13] The Orăştie district, according to a man who served as administrative secretary there for many years, had the reputation of being unusually thorough in its administration, which may account for its well-kept archive (housed in the state archives in the city of Deva).

Concerning Vlaicu's property structure, the expropriation and redistribution of 350 ha in the 1921 land reform effectively eliminated landlessness, even if a number of families had only a hectare or two. The 1945 reform furthered that process, expropriating 250 ha (largely from the Germans) and redistributing it to Romanian war veterans. According to a 1949 document, the richest villagers then were the priest, with 20 ha, and two others holding between 11 and 17 ha. Thirty-four families held five or more hectares[14]—the threshold, villagers believe, for being named a *chiabur*. As elsewhere, the imposition of quotas and the creation of *chiaburi* began in the late 1940s, but although a GAS (state farm) was formed in Vlaicu in 1948, and model GACs in Şibot, Vinerea, Pricaz and other nearby communes in 1950, collectivization was not seriously pushed in Vlaicu until 1958. In some villagers' opinion, Vlaicu's comparatively late collectivization was due to the presence of Aurel Vlaicu's brother, Ioan. As the community's most influential member, Ioan Vlaicu was a force to be reckoned with. Although he opposed collectivization, the government was reluctant to persecute the brother of a popular national hero. Having been named a *chiabur* in 1952, he was declassified in that same year. As far as I know, he was not later returned to *chiabur* status (unlike several other villagers).[15] He joined the GAC on 17 April 1959, fairly late in the process.

The village's late collectivization probably informs the lack of serious resistance in Vlaicu. As several Vlaiceni commented to me, by 1958 they had been hearing about collectivization for several years and knew that most villages around them had already been collectivized. They knew that "we had no choice," that "there was no way out," as they put it. When the final push to collectivize Vlaicu

began in early spring 1959, 222 households signed up in March and April alone. The collective was inaugurated that summer.

The process of making and unmaking *chiaburi* in Vlaicu—and in Orăştie district more broadly—seems to have followed the general intensifications and relaxations indicated in Levy's and Oprea's papers. Villagers interviewed in 2000–2003, however, seemed unaware of these complexities, or had forgotten them. Almost no one I spoke with knew that villagers could also be removed from *chiabur* status. Many hesitated to name *chiaburi* to me, but when they did, the lists were all smaller than the number of *chiaburi* I found in the archives. When asked what made someone a *chiabur*, most used the criterion of land owned—anything over five ha; sometimes, however, they would add that some people were "unjustly" made *chiaburi* with less land if they happened to have a mill or a pub or a still. Villagers' "confusion" about what made someone a chiabur was not unique to them, for Gheorghiu-Dej himself acknowledged in a 1952 speech that local cadres had too much independence in defining what a *chiabur* was.[16] For that reason, in 1952 the Party leadership sent officials in the region a document explaining how to define *chiaburi*.[17] I begin my discussion with some observations on that document, then turn to four cases from Vlaicu, augmented by some comments from several local officials involved in collectivizing the Orăştie district.

2. ORDERS FROM ABOVE

In 1952, the Chancery of the Secretariat of the PRM's Central Committee communicated to the regions a set of instructions entitled "Basic Indicators for Identifying *Chiabur* Households."[18] These were occasioned by the Party's opinion that the number of *chiabur* households had been impermissibly diminished during the "rightist deviation" of the previous year, and had to be rectified by the careful application of the correct indicators. Instead of making land-ownership a criterion for identifying *chiaburi* households, this document gave three other main indicators:

1. Any use of salaried labor, either permanent or seasonal, for more than 30 days (accompanied by the notation "in examining agricultural households to establish the category in which they belong, whether or not they exploit the work of others is of decisive importance").
2. Regardless of the size of the household or whether it employs salaried labor, any households possessing other means of production that they exploit with the aim of obtaining income (such as mills, tractors, threshers, draft animals rented out or distilleries used for sale beyond household needs).
3. Any households (whether or not they have land) that have commercial enterprises (shops, taverns, transport) or partake in private commerce (such as lending money or goods against payment).

The instructions ended with the following sentence: "To establish which households are *chiaburi*, each wealthy household must be evaluated closely in the light of the basic indicators given above, as regards both their past and their present situation." The document distinguished labor exchanges at times of peak labor investment from permanent exploitation of non-family labor (defined as more than 30 days per year). It also stated that *chiaburi* often hid exploitation by referring to it as "help from kinsmen," perhaps via "work parties" paid in money or goods. In short, the instructions drew attention to the invisible class content of certain village practices and to exploitation as a significant part of rural life, one the RWP intended to eradicate.

Appended to these instructions were eight pages of examples, in question-answer form. Most of the answers underscored the need for careful research into each situation, rather than the automatic application of abstract indicators. Indeed, one question asked: "How should the criteria for classifying *chiaburi* be transmitted to local-level Party organizations and the interested state organs, given that the Central Committee specified that these instructions cannot be copied?" The response was, "Regional Party committees must thoroughly train the Party apparatus and the district People's Councils in the basic indicators of the Central Committee of the P.M.R.; as is specified in the directive given by the C.C. of the P.M.R., the basic indicators cannot be copied and sent on. They are orientative indicators, not a recipe or a formula into which an agricultural household can be mechanically and automatically inserted, without a thorough analysis of each separate case." With this emphasis, higher authorities sought both to discourage a mechanical or formalistic approach to making *chiaburi* and to curb the abuse of power by local officials. They also attempted to assert greater central control over the process, expressing concern that "hostile elements infiltrated into the apparatus of the People's Councils" might be perverting it (a fear that, as I show below, was justified). Perhaps most significantly, they gave local cadres the nearly impossible task of carrying out careful research in countless villages to verify the status of recalcitrant peasant households.

3. MAKING AND UNMAKING *CHIABURI*

Local cadres were quick to follow up on the instructions to verify *chiaburi* and increase their numbers. In Orăştie district in 1950 there were 175 *chiaburi*, and by 1952 there were 1,260 (a seven-fold increase), evidence of heavy activity by local authorities.[19] A 1952 document with two columns labeled "number of *chiaburi*: old, new" gives the situation of *chiaburi* at the end of July: Şibot, the commune containing Vlaicu, went from 3 "old" *chiaburi* to 92 "new" ones, a thirty-one-fold increase.[20] For Vlaicu, two undated lists from 1952 have 43 and 38 *chiaburi*, the second list apparently resulting from inquiries concerning the first (which bears the penciled notations "Yes" and "No").[21] This is a marked increase over lists from 1950, which have between eight and 10 names.[22] Among the additional

names were 10 Germans who had already been expropriated in 1945 and had nothing at all by 1952[23]—suggesting that the reason for new listings was to augment the numbers, not make sensible decisions about who was realistically an "exploiter." Included in the same file is an undated notebook with handwritten comments on each of the 38 people in the second list. The comments characterize the person named, in ways such as this (reproduced exactly as in the original):

> 1. S.R. 40 yokes [23 ha], servant. Land 29 ari. 1 cow. Able-bodied workers 2. Was expropriated 1945. Economic power destroyed. Can no longer be neutralized.[24]

Across this description was penciled "NO" in large letters, indicating that he would no longer be classed as *chiabur*. [This kind of notation accompanied most German names, such as S.R.'s].

> 10. N.O. 10 ha he donated to the state in 1951. Possesses 87 ari, 1 cow. Able-bodied workers 2. Worked the land in sharecropping with servants until he gave it up in 1951. 3 houses, 2 in Vlaicu (1 castle called Vila O.) of which he sold one house in 1947 buying 5 yokes of land. Economic power very good, can be neutralized in good conditions.

Across this comment was penciled "YES": the petitioner would remain a *chiabur*.

> 14. R.P. Possesses 4.30 ha, 2 cows. Able-bodied workers 4, of whom 1 employed at Hunedoara. He was a blacksmith, did not work with employees [i.e., did not exploit labor], had 1–2 apprentices. Had a thresher until 1936, sold it in 1938 [sic]. Economic power sufficient, will able to handle neutralization to some extent. Did not and does not use salaried labor on his land. NO.

The degree of detail in these observations would seem to follow precisely the directives of 1952: that each case should be researched with care on its own terms. The end result of the investigation was that 22 names were crossed off the list of *chiaburi* and do not appear in lists for 1953 or 1954.[25]

As is evident in the archives, the increase produced an avalanche of contestations, as those labeled *chiabur* sought to reverse their status; this in turn produced an orgy of work for cadres to verify *chiaburi*. On May 11, 1953, the president of the People's Council of the Orăştie district reported to regional authorities that alongside his 623 *chiaburi* for that year, he had 484 contestations, of which 422 had not yet been resolved.[26] In a June 4, 1953 report, this same man reported the results of a meeting held to examine petitions for declassification: cadres had analyzed a total of 53 contestations, reconfirming *chiabur* status in 29 cases, reversing it in 24, and holding over 10 for further research.[27] If the Orăştie district had 1,029 *chiaburi* in 1952, in 1953 that number had fallen to 623, and it fell further to 443

by 1954.[28] The changes partly reflected Stalin's death, as well as struggles within the RWP over how to collectivize and how best to use *chiaburi* in doing so. Then, with the renewal of the collectivization campaign in 1956, we see more *chiaburi* being made, and more contestations.

The archives contain a number of contestations from Vlaicu: one in 1950, nine in 1952, ten in 1954, five in 1956, and three in 1958. Some of these came from persons who had already been *declassified* one or more times.[29] After verification, the number of *chiaburi* in Vlaicu dropped: from the 43 names on a 1952 list (see above), a file from 1953 gives only 14 *chiabur* households,[30] and another from 1954 has 13 names of which seven are crossed off.[31] The most informative file contained 11 contestations from 1952 through 1954 with rich documentation for each, including several "letters of reference" from other Vlaiceni, "recommendations" from the district delegate who was sent out to research the case, decisions of the district People's Council, and occasionally communications from regional Party headquarters.[32] Other files are less complete, including at most the petitions, a recommendation from the Orăştie delegate, and the final decision. I will summarize three cases and then suggest some thoughts that emerge both from them and from the larger set I examined, as well as my interviews.

"G.I. Has servant. Practiced commerce with animals and grain. Possesses 3.04 ha land," reads the justification on a 1952 list.[33] G.I. filed his contestation on September 29, 1952. He noted that he had less land than had been attributed to him (3.58 ha instead of 6.35 ha—the numbers differ from one mention to another), and that he had not bought but inherited most of it, or received it as his wife's dowry, and that he had been given 1.5 ha in the 1945 land reform for serving at the front—"precisely because I was not a wealthy man." He argued that his parents were middle peasants who had worked the land on their own; that he never had any means of exploiting or a distillery that he might have commercialized, "as I have been mistakenly classified"; that he has sold only small amounts of produce for household needs, it being obvious that with only 3.58 ha he could not have much surplus produce; that he never practiced commerce with animals, as is obvious because from his marriage until now he has had the same horned cattle; that he did sell some bulls but only "from my own production, a fact that can be verified by examining the bills of sale"; and that he had no house but rented his dwelling. He asked to have his situation verified and to be removed from the ranks of *chiaburi*.

Alongside his contestation were five references from Vlaiceni, written in their own hand, all saying they'd known him since childhood. They said he was a regular hardworking fellow who has always worked his own land, except for a brief period working in a factory or as a day laborer for the railway; that he received something in the 1945 reform; that his cattle were always well cared for, and that he raised beautiful bulls and allowed the People's Council to use them for hauling. Şibot commune sent its own delegate to do on-site research, who concurred in almost the same words as G.I.'s own petition, as did the delegate who went to Vlaicu from Orăştie to research the case. On May 11, 1953 the dis-

trict declared him "erased from the list of *chiaburi*." (A file from 1954 declares him removed again on 8 March 1954, indicating that he had been rechiaburized in the interim.)[34]

"B.P. Had his own store and rented the village tavern until 1948. Also had servants. Possesses 7.31 ha land. Uses wage labor."[35] B.P. had filed a contestation as early as 1950, and in 1954 he filed three more. The first contestation (filed February 26) pointed out that B.P. was a 64-year-old war invalid with 80 percent disability, owning only 7.31 ha of land that he worked with his family. "Being handicapped," he owned only two cows, which he used to work his land. He had never participated in politics; nor had he been convicted of any crime. He claimed to have been made *chiabur* because the commune leased him ("being an invalid") the communal tavern—"the permit belonged to the commune and was not my property. The commune fixed the prices and the commune took the income." Thus, he should not have been seen as an exploiter. On June 18, 1954 the district reported to the region thus: "He was not removed from the category of *chiaburi* for the following reasons: He possesses 7.20 ha. There are two persons in his family, he had a servant until 1950, he uses more than 30 days' wage labor per year, he had a tavern and a store until 1950."

Two days later, B.P. re-filed his contestation with the People's Council at Şibot, making most of the same arguments but specifying that in fact he had 6.35 ha, not 7.46 ha. The rest of the land belonged to his son and was registered as such since 1925. He also added, "All those who have had commune taverns have been removed from *chiaburi*." On July 2, B.P. submitted a third petition, this time to the district. He attached to it a copy of his 1924 medical examination by the Ministry of War stating the extent of his war disability, along with a statement from the Council at Şibot, which noted that he held the tavern "in conformity with dispositions at the time, that war invalids should be asked to take over commune taverns" and confirmed that the notary, not he, set the prices. They added that in 1940 the invalid B.P. had tried to get out of running the tavern because he could not manage it adequately, but the commune forced him to take it back; he closed it again in 1944 but was again forced to open it, and in 1947 he closed it definitively. The district sent its agent to research the case and on July 30, 1954 it declared him removed from the category of *chiabur*.

"L.A. Possesses at present 8.63 ha land. Had servants until 1948. Uses a salaried labor force for more than 30 days per year."[36] L.A. filed his contestation on March 10, 1954, having been made *chiabur* in 1952, "it being affirmed that I had a servant until 1949 and that I didn't work my 8 ha of land on my own." L.A. claimed that he hadn't employed a servant since 1925, and "only from the personal hatred of certain people of bad faith who reported on me out of spite have I been labeled a *chiabur*." In 1948, he continued, his fellow Vlaicean, comrade P.I., insisted that without any obligation, he take in P.I.'s nephew from a large and poor family in the mining town of Petroşani. "He stayed for five months in which time I bought him clothes and shoes out of the goodness of my heart, and he left very satisfied with the help I had given him. This help that I gave to someone needy was seized

upon by some of my enemies who affirmed that I had help in working my land, that is, a servant." He presents a list of 32 Vlaiceni (many of them his ritual kin) who will vouch that he has never had servants or exploited anyone. On April 28, 1954, the district delegate wrote a report in almost exactly the same words as L.A.'s contestation, recommending that he be removed. Two days later, the president of the district Council approved it.

4. COMMENTARY

L.A. was one of Vlaicu's most influential men, from one of its most influential families. As mayor in the 1920s, he had managed to acquire a substantial amount of land that was supposed to go to war veterans and poor people (this is clear from maps of Vlaicu's terrain after the 1921 reform). When I attended his funeral in 1973, nearly the whole village was there; people talked about how many villagers used to go to work his fields in "work parties," how many ritual kin (*fini*) he had, and so on. He was, according to my conversations with a functionary from the district Council, just the kind of person whom authorities would want to win over, in hopes of using him to bring more villagers into the collective.[37] Was this why he was so readily moved out of *chiabur* status? (Unlike some who were declassified in 1952–1954, I did not find him in subsequent lists of *chiaburi* who had been rechiaburized and were filing new contestations in 1956–1958.[38]) Along with several others, L.A. sought in his contestation to explain why someone who appeared to be his servant really was not; others excused their use of extra hands at harvest as being "what any normal peasant does." As was common in the stories of wealthy Vlaiceni, L.A.'s story tried to change the significance of behavior once considered a sign of high status into behavior common to most villagers. For example, *chiaburi* were singled out for using anyone other than family members to work their land—precisely the thing that marked L.A. as a man of high status in his earlier years. Wealthy peasants had always been recognizable for *not* working alone with their families, but with servants, kin, and others. Now they had to present themselves as if they worked alone. They were compelled to adopt the terms of the Party and respond to them. In petition after petition they presented a new vision of themselves and their social relations, seen through a new lens. The documents cited also highlight the inventiveness of the peasants' petitions, which employed numerous techniques for evading official categories, such as: claiming that they owned less land than they were actually charged with; dividing their land into several plots and attributing them to other family members; pointing out that their land was inherited or was the wife's dowry, and thus should not qualify them for *chiabur* status; invoking their military service or their physical handicap (which went from being a social stigma to a certificate of exculpation).

We also see from these cases that the process of making, unmaking, and remaking *chiaburi* involved a struggle between individualizing (or decontextualizing), on the one hand, and "communalizing" (or contextualizing) on the other. The cri-

teria given in lists of *chiaburi* individualized a person—always a single name, usually the male household head—while assigning him a set of characteristics *specific to him* (and significant to the Party)—he had a servant, owned a lot of land, etc. The contestations and their supporting references from Vlaiceni would then attempt to reposition the person in his community, making his behavior appear normal and like that of others, and establishing a context in which it could be seen as *not* what the Party's description of him claimed: not having servants but helping poor people; not exploiting labor but exchanging work like any peasant at the harvest. In the process of making *chiaburi*, the Party strove to individualize and decontextualize them, while they reversed that procedure. The status of *chiabur* thus becomes a kind of negotiation (see Lățea's paper) rather than an imposition. Moreover, we see from these documents the failure of the Party's efforts to create among poor and middle peasants a certain kind of solidarity, which would speed collectivization by expelling so-called *chiaburi* from community life.[39] Creating *chiaburi* was intended to promote class struggle, but gave way to expressions of community solidarity with those labeled *chiabur*.

Perhaps an echo of this repossessing of community members is seen in the insistence of many of my respondents between 2000 and 2003 that there weren't "real" *chiaburi* in Vlaicu, only "made-up" *chiaburi*. For example, C.B.[40]: "The majority of *chiaburi* in other places either had a mill or had a distillery or something like that. *Those* were *chiaburi*. But these ones here didn't have anything like that, it was just that they had to be *made*… In every village some people had to be made *chiaburi*." Others too recognized *chiaburi* as being like themselves rather than class enemies. Here is P.D. (his family were poor peasants who received land in the 1921 reform), discussing Vlaicu's *chiaburi* with me in 2002, particularly one Sandu B.:

> And his father Andrei, who had a bit more land, were these guys *chiaburi*? Should you make them *chiaburi*? Because they worked like… like slaves, that's how they worked their land!. So you make him *chiabur*? […] A *chiabur* is someone who has a source of income like a mill, a car, other sources, not someone who just has a little land and works it… Around here there weren't really any, here in Transylvania, as there were in Moldavia. There people had bigger estates… they had nobility.[41]

G.I.'s case above also shows how he was made to stand out, but was then repossessed by his fellow villagers, who insisted on seeing him as a member of the community—someone they had known and observed since childhood. Recontextualizing a person as a community member was therefore a way of resisting his appropriation by the Party. G.I. himself sought to keep from standing out by presenting his commercial activities (in which he indeed engaged, even spending time in jail for speculation) as just normal good farming practices. In other words, his contestation tried to erase what had made him visible in the village by passing him off as just like others.

How are we to understand the process whereby G.I. and others learned to do this? Given the handwriting, it is highly unlikely that most petitioners wrote their contestations themselves. Whoever wrote them must have coached people on how to present themselves to the authorities—and those writers were probably in some sort of authority position. In G.I.'s case, however, the villagers' "references" are handwritten by the villagers themselves. They are not copies of some model, though they share important themes. That three of the five of them are from factory workers suggests that someone was "coaching" *chiaburi* in the new rules they had to learn. This should not be wholly surprising, for it was in the Party's interest to be sure that not too many middle peasants were incorrectly categorized as *chiaburi*, alienating precisely the pivotal group in rural society. It makes sense that officials might be coaching them.

In other words, the process of contesting *chiabur* status was a pedagogical opportunity, in which plaintiffs learned the rules of the new regime so as to manipulate them. B.P.'s case shows how he refined his petition, taking the Party's categories more seriously and using them to argue against it. He not only reminded the Party of its own directive that war invalids should be given communal taverns; additionally, he learned to present more complete evidence, telling the district exactly who set the prices and took the profits from his pub, as well as having the communal Council affirm how reluctant an inn-keeper he was—hardly the traits of real *chiabur*.

5. JANUS-FACED MIDDLEMEN: LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In the dialogue between the peasants and the regime, the critical players were, of course, local officials of various kinds. It is very difficult to obtain unbiased information from such people in interviews after 1989, because all were understandably interested in presenting themselves as "dissidents" under communism. Nonetheless, my interviews revealed information showing that local cadres charged with collectivization might fulfill their mission with zeal or might do so in only a formalistic way—that is, the center did not wholly control their performance. Their reasons for doing so could range from personal involvement with locals, to laziness and fear, to a determination that the Party not go overboard and precipitate excessive suffering.

For example, T.M. (born elsewhere) had been stationed in Vlaicu at the nearby army garrison during the war. He married a Vlaicu girl and remained in the village until 1948, returning to it in the late 1980s when he retired. When I spoke with him in summer 2003 about chiaburization, he said: "There really weren't *chiaburi* around here, but they made some. The police chief had the power to make and unmake *chiaburi*."[42] We reminisced about Andrei S., a Vlaicean who served for a time as police chief in a nearby commune. "He would tell me that at Party meetings, they named all kinds of people *chiaburi*, and he would reply 'This one no, that one no.' Andrei wasn't a Party member… The police chief at Şibot was a guy

named Necula, who wasn't a Party member either… Necula wasn't really eager to make *chiaburi* in Vlaicu." When T.M. knew him in the late 1940s, Necula would have been in on the process very early, before the campaign got seriously underway. If he were like Andrei S. (whom I knew in the 1970s and 1980s), he'd have been given an important function because he was of poor social background. Perhaps, like Andrei S., he too was a "very decent man," someone glad to have a new opportunity but unwilling to inflict misery on others.

Another example concerns I.E., a Vlaicean of poor social origin who was already a factory worker in 1945. He was persuaded to become a Party activist, but as he told me in summer 2002, he soon discovered that he lacked aptitude for the work.[43] They sent him to Party School in Deva for a month and then sent him back to the Orăştie district as an activist. His job was to go to his assigned villages and try to persuade people to join the collective, but, he told me, he didn't like the work. He would say to his Party superiors, "I can't urge people to join when I know we haven't got enough tractors and other things to make the collective work properly," but they would reply, "You have to do it." He hated the work so much that he would tell his superiors he was going off to do his job, then go hide in his hayloft and write reports saying he'd been where he was supposed to go, and send them in. When his superiors questioned him about them, asking if he was really doing the work, he would reply, "How can I lie to them, when I know there are no tractors—we say there are, but there aren't." Eventually he was moved to an office job in town.

This man's story does not directly concern *chiaburi*, but nonetheless reveals a mentality that might. My interviews with M.H. and C.D., two functionaries in the Orăştie district administration, show us something more.[44] Here is a lengthy quote from M.H. concerning how he and his colleagues struggled to reduce the number of *chiaburi* even as others were making new ones. (This is how he presented himself; knowing him for 30 years, I find the presentation plausible.) These observations emerged spontaneously from a conversation in which he brought up the question of whether or not functionaries followed orders from above.

> M.H. I had a *chiabur*, Ştefănie din Beriu. The secretary of the People's Council was in very bad relations with him, and Ştefănie told me why: the secretary asked him for a sow and he refused to give him one. So I was there right in that period when they were making people *chiaburi*, and the secretary denounced him. I talked to someone at the Party offices about getting him out, but the secretary of the People's Council in Beriu had it in for him. After we would leave, he'd put him right back on that list again. I'd have barely left there, having taken Ştefănie out of being a *chiabur* so he would no longer have to pay those huge requisitions and other burdens, and my boss would come in and ask, "What did you do with Ştefănie?" "I got him out of *chiabur* status. Why?" "Well, he just phoned me to say he's a *chiabur* again!"
>
> K.V. How many times did that happen?

> M.H. About five or six times, until I went to that secretary and I said to him: "Listen here, Comrade Secretary. If you pick up your pen one more time to make him a *chiabur* and to subject him to all the torment *chiaburi* go through, you're out of a job, you hear me? because everyone knows about you, the regional First Secretary and the Secretary for Agrarian Problems and the President and the Vice President, and they'll wipe the floor with you. I know why you keep making him a *chiabur*, for a sow!" And after that he stopped doing it.
> K.V. Why was Ştefănie made a *chiabur*?
> M.H. He had land.
> K.V. So how did you manage to declassify him if…
> M.H. Well, he had land, but I said to them, "He's not against the regime. This is a prosperous guy who minds his own business and doesn't get involved in politics against the Party, so leave him alone. When we start trying to make a collective there, he's the kind of person we'll have to appeal to." …A well-to-do man had a lot of ritual kin, a lot of friends, had workers he worked with, and influenced the atmosphere in the village. And this was the kind of person we would have to use for collectivizing. If this kind of fellow signed up, he would break the line; after him all resistance would fall apart.[45]

Here M.H. gives a sense of two strategies among Orăştie officials, which he attributed on other occasions to "those in the administration" (such as himself) and "those from the Party" (such as the uneducated miners brought to Orăştie from the Jiu Valley). One strategy was to keep increasing the numbers of *chiaburi*; the other was to unmake them (as with L.A. above, perhaps) so they would help with collectivization. It is likely that the balance of forces between these two strategies shifted with the changing policies toward collectivization in the Central Committee. But M.H. saw it as a way of trying to make the regime more human. In another discussion, when I asked him about his attitude toward the policies he was told to execute, he said (predictably) that he strove to mitigate their effects as much as possible. I asked for an example.

> M.H. For example, when *chiaburi* were being made. They came with huge lists of *chiaburi* and from those lists I'd leave just two or three in each commune.
> K.V. You mean you declassified people?
> M.H. I mean I communicated to them [the Party] that the others didn't fulfill the criteria for being *chiaburi*…

Exactly the same points emerged from my conversation with C.D., secretary of the district People's Council.[46] When I asked him for an example of his attitude toward his work, he too mentioned the unmaking of *chiaburi*. His goal, he said, was to take a village with 30–40 *chiaburi* and gradually reduce that number to

three or four, as a way of modifying the Party's most unappealing policies. There was an important difference, however, between him and M.H.: C.D. had attended industrial high school for a few years, and his family origins were fairly modest; M.H., by contrast, had a university degree, and his father was a *chiabur*. In describing the process of unmaking *chiaburi*, M.H. told me, he kept thinking of his father whenever he got other people out of *chiabur* status—and by the time he left his job, he'd gotten his father out too. His comments suggest that among other things, making and unmaking *chiaburi* might be about class struggle not only within the villages but on a larger scale as well, with functionaries "in the administration" (all of whom had educated signatures, indicating privileged family origins) preferring declassification while those with untutored signatures ("those from the Party") preferred to make *chiaburi*. M.H. was clearly one of the "hostile elements infiltrated in the apparatus of the People's Councils" that the Party worried about.

It was in part on cadres like M.H. and C.D. that the Party-State built up its power—cadres who had their own ideas about who should and should not be *chiaburi*, who encouraged *chiaburi* petitions to be restored into the village, recontextualized as nothing special, and who would help *chiaburi* toward this end. Ironically, these same functionaries later used the declassified people they reintegrated into village communities to break those communities open. Their goal was to form a new kind of community by insistently "persuading" these people to join the collective, and thereby to draw in others as well.

A final case of making and unmaking *chiaburi*, involving one S.Ş., shows something of this kind of action by local cadres, and also perhaps the kind of *chiabur* whom officials like M.H. would *not* find useful in attracting others into the GAC.

> S.Ş. Possesses 8.73 ha land. Had servants until 1938. Uses wage workers for more than 30 days a year.[47]

This characterization was enriched in a second listing, from 1953:

> Possesses 8.40 ha land, in the family are 4 people of whom one is away, had a servant until 1949, uses over 40 days of wage work per year.[48]

Nevertheless, in a meeting on June 9, 1953 to decide on the fate of certain *chiaburi*, he and two others were removed without explanation. In an interview in summer 2003, his son, S.I., gave me his version of why.[49] S.I. was a gregarious fellow and had gotten to know two Hungarians, Gyuri and Feri, newly appointed to posts as mayor and vice mayor in the Şibot commune office (he also had a Hungarian girlfriend somewhere around this time). Although the two men were not supposed to fraternize with locals—especially not the sons of *chiaburi*—they became friends with S.I. They were miners from very simple backgrounds who had "eaten nothing but black bread all their lives," as S.I. put it. He would invite them over for a meal or give them food from time to time, including white flour. In

exchange, he said, they offered to recommend that his father and his uncle be declassified. Indeed, both names are missing from lists in 1953 (they had both filed contestations in 1952).[50]

But S.Ş. did not remain a "middle peasant" for long. In April 1956, the Şibot Council recommended he be rechiaburized, which he was, on the grounds that he exploited non-family labor. He contested the decision on July 14, 1956, and again on August 21. The second time, he emphasized his decorated service in World War II and the government's promise that it would be grateful to its soldiers. The result was a notation dated September 27, 1956 that proposed he'd be declassified because he no longer had the means of exploitation.[51] But then, on January 22, 1958, the Şibot Council again recommended to Orăştie that he be "put into the category of *chiabur* households," a decision they justified with a simple listing of his land, animals, implements and permanent use of salaried labor.[52] S.Ş. again contested his status (although without mentioning his army service), this time to the regional People's Council in Deva, which ordered Orăştie to follow up. The functionary sent out to research his case was someone new to these investigations, who saw him as "a recalcitrant person, who doesn't respect the dispositions of local Party organs" and recommended that "seeing the economic power of resident S.Ş. as well as his position toward the popular democratic regime I propose that he should continue to remain in the category of chiabur." This annulled the earlier 1956 decision of declassification. S.Ş. was given a 50 percent increase in taxes, retroactive to 1956, and was refused entry into the collective farm that was then forming.

Why S.Ş. was bounced in and out of *chiabur* status is unclear (perhaps, as his contestation says, it was from some personal vendetta). But it is noteworthy that for most of the 1950s, the same functionaries had been involved in making and unmaking him a *chiabur*. But by 1958, many functionaries had changed. For the new ones, S.Ş. had no history, nor was he the kind of person whom authorities could use as a positive example, like L.A., discussed above. S.Ş. did not have many ritual kin and was in fact a somewhat withdrawn person, not friendly to the regime. In 1996 he told me how he had taken a pitchfork to the people who came to make him join the collective. This was the kind of person who had to be kept as a negative example for making Vlaiceni sign up—even as other *chiaburi* were being made middle peasants in hopes that they would lead Vlaiceni into the GAC.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The above discussion has many implications for the matter with which I began—the relation of peasants to the state—although these implications raise more questions than I can answer (at least, on the basis of my limited sources). In closing I will briefly mention three of these implications. The first concerns the efficacy of contestations by *chiaburi* against the Party. In discussing the case of B.P., I

observed that district officials listened to him, researched his situation, and granted his request. I believe it would be a mistake, however, to see this result and the other successful contestations, such as those of G. I. and L.A., as a victory of peasants against the state. 1954 was a significant year, for the collectivization campaign had been relaxed and would not intensify again for another two years. Perhaps it was easier to be declassified in that year than in earlier or later ones—in short, perhaps the efforts of B.P., G.I. and L.A. to learn the new rules were less effective in their declassification than was the timing of their petitions, in a period when cadres were under less pressure to make *chiaburi* and could unmake them without repercussions.

Moreover, in contesting *chiabur* status, these people had had to respond to an agenda set by the Party. To avoid persecution, they'd had to learn its reasoning and its categories of significance. The Party had indeed established a new peasant-state relation, a "dialogic" one based on a conversation between two parties. But it was not one of equality. To call a relationship "dialogic" does not mean that its participants entered it on equal terms, for in a "dialogue" it often happens that one side sets the terms of discourse for the other, as with chiaburization and declassification. The authorities created new ways of speaking and thinking. Then, with various forms of coercion, they forced certain categories of villagers to adopt those new ways (helped by those officials who aided *chiaburi* in writing their contestations). Even though the peasants tried to manipulate and reinterpret the terms, it was the Party that reached the final verdict (or simply disregarded the petitions, lacking the bureaucratic capacity to resolve them). Although the petitioners in these three cases may have felt they had defeated the Party at its own game, they had, in fact, lost their autonomy. They—L.A. most of all—had needed to create a vision of themselves different from the one they were accustomed to, using values and categories different from those in which they had enjoyed social status.

Second, the process of making and unmaking *chiaburi* marked the regime's deepest penetration yet into people's daily lives. Each contestation required a field trip by a district official to research the situation. During these trips they might collect "letters of reference" from certain villagers, or talk with others in order to draw up their final recommendation. The contestations I read show that the Orăştie Council took seriously—at least some of the time—the instructions communicated in 1952, requiring cadres to look closely into every case and not make *chiaburi* according to abstract criteria. L.A.'s contestation listed 32 villagers as "character witnesses," and there were check marks next to seven of the names. In this way the Party would enter deeply into villagers' lives. Its delegates traveled to rural communities and held discussions, perhaps even visiting the houses of the *chiaburi* and their "referees." Here, then, is a state that appears in its subject's courtyard and house, buys drinks for his friends or goes to visit them, approaches his relatives, all so as to know him more intimately.

But, third, the man-hours implied in the work of these investigations are tre-

mendous, going beyond the Party-State's capacity so soon after it took power. This raises questions about the limitations on the Party's ability to impose its designs on its peasants. One reason why so many ill-prepared people became communist cadres was that there weren't enough good ones to do the work. Thus, in order to extend its span of control and to deepen its penetration of villages—in order to achieve the new peasant-state relation it intended—the Party proposed measures that may have been effectively impossible to carry out. Did all those cadres really go to villages as they were told to, or did they (like I.E. above) hide in the barn and write the required statements from the models at their disposal? Or, instead, did they go where they were told, and then drink all evening with someone whose information about co-villagers they would write down as truth? (Is this part of the reason why so many Party documents concerning the behavior of activists complain about their excessive drinking?) Might the wording of some of the "recommendations" that district delegates wrote in response to contestations—wording often almost identical to that of the original petition itself—reflect similar "formalism" in work habits? Given how unprepared the PRM was for the immense task it faced in 1948, how could it control its activists effectively? Do we see here some germs of the later workings of Romanian communism, the result of an administrative ambition far in excess of its organizational capacities? These are new questions for the study of collectivization, questions aroused by our interdisciplinary method.

NOTES

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1 See, for example, the essays in Eric R. Wolf, *Pathways of Power: Building an Anthropology of the Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), as well as other works by Wolf, the foremost U.S. scholar of peasantries and peasant societies.

2 Gheorghe Onişoru, *Instaurarea regimului comunist în România* (Bucharest: no publisher, 2002), 90–91.

3 The same was true of decollectivization after 1991. See Katherine Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), chapter 3. My research on decollectivization shaped the way I approach its obverse.

4 See Ioan Chiper, "Considerations on the Numerical Evolution and Ethnic Composition of the Romanian Communist Party, 1921–1952," *Totalitarian Archives,* X (Spring–Sum-

mer 2002), 11. Chiper also discusses alternative figures for membership in the PRC in 1944 and settles on the figure of about 1,000.

5 I use these terms to mean the process of labeling people "rich peasants" or "exploiters" (*chiaburi*) and of removing them from that category. I use "declassification" in preference to the seemingly more apt "dechiaburization" because in literature on Soviet collectivization, the term comparable to dechiaburization (dekulakization) has a meaning fully established as not simply taking people out of the status of "rich peasant" but eliminating them altogether by killing or deportation. Most Romanian literature uses dechiaburization in the same way. On this issue of terminology, see the editor's introduction, note 58.

6 Onişoru, *Instaurarea*, 91; Dan Cătănuş and Octavian Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea Agriculturii în România Dimensiunea Politică,* vol. 1: *1949–1953* (Bucharest: Institutul Naţional pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 13.

7 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 25. The authors note specific instructions that local cadres should *not* liquidate *chiaburi* at the outset but only *neutralize* them, lest the food supply be jeopardized.

8 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea,* 21.

9 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 25.

10 See, for example, Marius Oprea, ed., *Banalitatea Răului: O istorie a Securităţii în documente, 1949–1989* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2002), 217–218.

11 For this project, I interviewed 29 elderly Vlăiceni (two of them were low-level party cadres active in collectivization), from families of all major wealth groups, as well as some who had been employed outside agriculture. Nine interviews included husband and wife, seven were with the husband only (some of them widowers) and 13 were with widows; about half were tape-recorded. In addition, I interviewed three people who did not live in Vlaicu but had held jobs in the district People's Council (its secretary, head of the agrarian section, and chief prosecutor), and the widow of a fourth, who had been preşedintele sfatului la district for several years in the early-mid 1950s. In Deva I consulted the archives of the PMR, regiunea Hunedoara, for the 1950s and also archives from the Orăştie district.

12 I say "about" because figures are inconsistent. For example, two different listings of the raw data from 1948 give the total surface area as 2,235 yokes (1,287 ha) and 1,122 ha; one puts the arable surface area at 920 ha, the other at 808 ha. The first source was the nominal listing of households with their land, animals and agricultural implements, known as the Borderoul Agricol de Producţie, or BAP (Institutul Central de Statistică, *Recensământul agricol şi al populaţiei din ianuarie 1948*; ANIC, Bucharest). The second source is in DJAN Hunedoara ("Recapitulaţia generală a tarlalelor din hotarul comunei Aurel Vlaicu," fond "Camera Agricolă Deva," file 49/1948, Aurel Vlaicu). Figures in an unnamed file kept in the offices of the former collective farm in Vlaicu give the total at the end of collectivization as 1,309 ha, of which 948 ha were arable.

13 Vlaicu is now in Hunedoara county, Geoagiu commune.

14 DJAN Hunedoara, fond "Sfatul Popular al Regiunii Hunedoara, Secţia Agricolă," file 2/1949 (n.p.).

15 Ioan Vlaicu's daughter Aurelia claims that she was the one to get the family declassified, through a visit to Bucharest to Prime Minister Petru Groza himself (a native of Deva). Whether or not she did so, it is true that Ioan Vlaicu and Groza had met when Groza came to the village for the Aviation Day celebrations. According to T.M., quoted

later in this paper, Ioan Vlaicu approached Groza and begged to be declassified. Groza replied that he would have to write a petition—he couldn't effect dechiaburization out of thin air. The petition was approved. In addition, documents concerning the *chiabur* status of Aurel Vlaicu's sister Valeria suggest that officials in Deva had received instructions from above to leave the Vlaicu family alone (DJAN Hunedoara, Fond Ministerul de Interne, "Referitor la Sfat Raion Orăştie" [henceforth MISR Orăştie], file 7/1954.)

16 Cătănuş and Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea*, 16–17.

17 This document may have resulted from a visit to Moscow to clarify the matter (Robert Levy, personal communication).

18 DJAN Hunedoara, fond 16, "Comitetul regional PMR Hunedoara," file 430/1952, f. 252–263. The four pages with the basic indicators did not have a date, though they mention a Central Committee Plenary of February 29–March 1, 1952; the 8 pages of explanations, which would seem to be responses to questions that arose from implementing the indicators, were dated September 11, 1952. Given statistics from Orăştie that show a large increase in the numbers of *chiaburi* during 1952, I am assuming that the indicators were sent down soon after the Plenary ended on March 1.

19 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 10/1951 (n.p.). The date on this file is 1951, but some of the documents have later dates.

20 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 37/1952 (n.p.).

21 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 37/1952 (n.p.) and file 6/1952 (n.p.).

22 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 9/1952 (n.p.).

23 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 9/1950 (n.p.).

24 To "neutralize" (*îngrădi*) means to place such heavy burdens on *chiaburi* that they are forced to produce as much as possible; their harvest is then taken, leaving them with no means to reproduce their privileged situation in villages.

25 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 20/1953 (n.p.), and file 6/1954 (n.p.).

26 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 10/1951 (n.p.).

27 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 20/1953 (n.p.). The totals add up to 63, not 53.

28 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 10/1951 (n.p.).

29 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 9/1950, 6/1952, 7/1954, and 30/1958 (all n.p.).

30 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 20/1953 (n.p.).

31 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 6/1954 (n.p.).

32 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 7/1954 (n.p.).

33 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 37/1952 (n.p.). The details of the contestations come from MISR Orăştie, file 7/1954 (n.p.).

34 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 7/1954 (n.p.).

35 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 37/1952 (n.p.).

36 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 37/1952 (n.p.).

37 M.H., 75 years old male, agronomist from a *chiabur* family, former functionary at the Agrarian Section in Orăştie, interview in Geoagiu June 8, 2002.

38 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 30/1958 (n.p.).

39 See Bogdan Tănăsescu, *Colectivizarea între propagandă şi realitate* (Bucharest: Globus, n.d.), 29.

40 C.B., female, born in 1926, from midddle-peasant family, married to a skilled worker, interviewed in Aurel Vlaicu on August 18, 2000.

41 P.D., male, born in 1926, middle peasant, interviewed in Aurel Vlaicu on August 24, 2000.

42 T.M., male, born in 1919, former army officer, interviewed in Aurel Vlaicu on June 15, 2000.
43 I.E., male, born 1914, worker and former Party activist from a poor family, interviewed in Aurel Vlaicu on August 16, 2000.
44 C.D. was a functionary of the Orăştie district sfat popular from about 1948 to 1978; M.H. collaborated with the Orăştie secţia agrară at various points and was its head in 1956–1957; he was recruited to help persuade peasants into collectives both before and after. I met C.D. only at the time of the interview, but I have known M.H. since 1973 and discussed the question of *chiaburi* with him frequently from 2000 on.
45 M.H., June 8, 2002.
46 C.D., male, born in 1924, from a family of railway workers, served as secretary at the Orăştie People's Council, interviewed in Orăştie on June 18, 2002.
47 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 37/1952 (n.p.).
48 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 20/1953 (n.p.).
49 S.I., male, born 1931, from a chiabur family, worked at a machinery park, interviewed in Aurel Vlaicu on June 14, 2003.
50 DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 6/1952 (n.p.), and file 20/1953 (n.p.).
51 Both these contestations and the results are in DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 30/1958 (n.p.).
52 These contestations and replies are in DJAN Hunedoara, MISR Orăştie, file 30/1958 (n.p.).

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Revolution in Bits and Pieces: Collectivization in Southern Romania (Craiova Region)

DANIEL LĂȚEA

> They used to show movies about Russian collectives, they showed them on the back of a house. We would lie on the grass, where the *hora* dancing had been held before. We were thinking "My Goodness, they must have made these up!" We didn't think that… Cow herds taken by people to pasture… Like Paradise! That's how it was in that movie they used to show here… "Where did all these cows come from? Look, what a big crowd of people! What a big ruckus!" The people with hoes were shouting: "Hurrah! Hurray!" The fiddlers were playing… We were supposed to see the good life awaiting us! But we didn't believe a thing! "What's wrong with these people, where did they come from?" We didn't believe life could be like this in that country. We wondered: "How did they gather all these people who filled the cars? How did they bring so many cows, these whole herds?" It was just like it happened later with us, when Ceauşescu visited and they'd bring all the cows for him to see…
>
> Maria T., 76 years old, female, agricultural worker.

Early morning: exuberant villagers go out from their courtyards, happy to begin a new workday. The weather is good and the fiddlers play briskly. In a swift display of organization, cows are gathered into herds and headed towards pasture. Upon seeing the cars transporting villagers to the fields, the most impatient of them start to wave with their hoes in the air: "Hurrah! Hurray!" For the villagers of Dobrosloveni (Oltenia, southern Romania) and, most probably, for all those who entertain a realist notion of work, such actions from the propaganda movies on collectivization could only be fables, fairy tales; in short, improvisations. How is it possible to work as if you were celebrating (and the reverse)? How can someone not see the difference between Wednesdays and Sundays? How can you wave a hoe as if it was a trophy? As for the cows… well, is it possible that there are villages with so many cows, all of them fat and beautiful? Such things would be possible only beyond the *worldly* distinctions between the human and non-human, joys and troubles, work and celebration, beautiful cows and wretched cows; that is, in Paradise.

This paper analyzes some worldly categories and distinctions that are used by people from Dobrosloveni in relation to "collectivization." From the point of view of most of my interlocutors, the "real collectivization" began at the end of 1958, reached its apogee in December 1960, when "more than half" of the villagers signed petitions to join the collective, and was finished in March 1961, when the GAC "Viața Nouă" (New Life) was established. Before the "real collectivization," they talk of the "times of *boyars*,"* the "time of war," the "time of famine," the "time of *întovărăşiri*" (associations), the "time of quotas" and, finally, a more ambiguous period, "time that crawls" (*timpul se tîrăşte*). This was when teams of activists carried out "persuasion work," which made the villagers hide, avoid meetings, "mind their own business," "try to buy some time," "make up excuses," and attempt to bargain, negotiate or otherwise try to reach some understanding with the authorities.[1] Such a periodization has several implications, one of them being that the process of collectivization, as we conceive of it in this volume (1949–1962), is summarized in Dobrosloveni in the form of sequences—time intervals that are relatively autonomous, especially when they need to be morally evaluated. These are recombined according to a local philosophy of history that is significantly different from both the academic and official versions.

I would describe this local perspective on history as a practical one, characterized by healthy skepticism ("people know only hardships!," "either way, life is hard," "we'll live and see…"), a careful tuning of the balance between opportunities and chances ("God gives the milk, but not the pail!," "when you jump over many pails, one will surely stick into your ass!," "stretch your arm no farther than your sleeve will reach") and a perpetual nostalgia for the past ("it was better before…"). Finally, one can add to the above list a type of structural mistrust, if not actual horror, of the diverse forms of proselytism, be they initiated by large entities (the state, political parties, religious organizations) or emergent in the course of interactions among the villagers ("who are you to tell me what to do?," "how come you know so much?," "why don't you mind your own business?").[2]

Given these circumstances, the possibilities for heroic action are relatively limited. Stubbornly resisting the requests of "authorities" is tantamount to claiming hero status, and this is morally dubious. But hurrying to join the collective before the others or talking like an activist are equally suspicious attitudes, as they border on exaggeration. It is hard to be a hero in Dobrosloveni; at most, one could *pretend* to be a hero. The recipe for happiness has to do with finding the *middle way:* to be humane (*să fii om*), or, at least, to find a plausible explanation of the forces preventing people from retaining their humanity (*omenie*). When worse comes to worst, it is ideal for people to be able to prove that they did everything in their power to tame these forces; not so much to annul their effects,

* *Boyars*: former aristocratic class in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldova. While aristocratic titles and privileges were legally abolished in 1858, the boyars remained a social class of large landowners and enjoyed dominant political representation and influence. [*Editors' note*]

but to succeed in retaining as much of their "humane" reputation as possible. But what are the forces that prevent people from being "humane," and how can their effects be attenuated? As a rule, evil comes from the outside. Excepting the effects of natural disasters, the greatest evil originates from the "state," conceived as an external and abstract entity, that is, altogether "natural." Unfortunately, in this essay I cannot do justice to the mimicry, gestures, bodily postures or tonal variations of those recounting their encounters with the state: during military service, while tensely waiting in the halls of various bureaucracies or in the course of some other brief interactions with directors, engineers, mayors, prefects, commanders, officers and other officials. Nevertheless, a few such instances could be suggestive. A woman recounts a meeting with the mayor of the village. The meeting time was 10:00 am. She had to walk five minutes to the place of the meeting. One might *think* she left five, or maybe ten, minutes before 10:00 am. She *felt* differently: "they asked me to come at 10:00 am… I went at about 8:00 am… I couldn't wait at home… it was so cold… but I waited… I waited outside…" The meeting hour approaches and she heads towards the Mayor's Office: "I entered and… I had something, like a shudder: '*What I'm going to say here?*'"

A man recalls an encounter with an agricultural engineer. The engineer gives him instructions on a specific task. The man keeps nodding. He also nods now, thirty years later, while recalling the encounter. He also performs his last reaction to the engineer's instructions: "*Right away, mister engineer!*" The phrase communicates more than mere verbal agreement (most of the time, despite the fact that one disagrees). It is also a certain positioning of the head, a way of looking and uttering words. When you salute respectfully, it is better to show (and not just to say) that you know your place. To have a contemporary version: full of humor, a private entrepreneur told me that all you need to do when facing agents from Financial Control is to talk in such a way that they get the following message: "Sir, let me kiss your hand, I'm just a fool, forgive me, I'll give you anything, just let me live my life!"[3]

By stressing these elements of local knowledge, I do not try to reduce a community to some set of rules. Like the villagers of Dobrosloveni, I too know that rules exist to be manipulated. I would like to approximate a particular horizon of expectation, a local definition of the difference between possible and impossible when facing troubles, especially those related to the state. I try to elicit a kind of local memory that seems to have retained not so much the physical or symbolic violence exercised by state representatives, nor even the heroism of villagers who "resisted" these intrusions, but rather a particular type of encounter between state and villagers. It is a kind of encounter often referred to by using the rhetoric of markets and fairs ("negotiation," "bargaining" or "haggling") or by emphasizing the local practical intelligence, the smart compromise, well aimed moves, strategy and tactics. I try to integrate these memories into my discussion of the process of collectivization.

Thus, I will analyze the productivity of such metaphors—understanding, bargaining, negotiation, haggling (in contract to "imposition" or "constraint)—so as

to better understand the process of collectivization in the village of Dobrosloveni.[4] The metaphors themselves, and especially the complex array of practices they indicate—avoidance strategies, indirect speech, the rhetoric of imprecision, deliberate delaying, lies, irony, etc.[5]—represent the villagers' contribution to defining the terms of the conversation (or their misunderstanding) with the state, a conversation that we refer to by using the (possibly too general) notion of collectivization.[6]

It is productive to think collectivization from both an epistemological point of view, because it renders visible those local practices that usually remain outside the grand narratives starring grand actors and producers, and that, by their unfolding, contradict the abusive identification of the communist project with its effective realization; and from an ethical point of view, because it is a reminder of something apparently banal, that is, regardless of how refined the forms of exercising power may be, people in real situations maintain a relative capacity of action and are sufficiently creative to tame, or even transform, power, at least to an infinitesimal extent, so they can then make it work, as much as possible, to their own benefit.[7]

1. THE VILLAGE IN THE TIMES OF THE BOYARS: DRIVING OXEN TO THE WATERWHEEL

The commune of Dobrosloveni is located in Southern Romania, in the valley of Teslui creek, about 6 km south from the town of Caracal, and includes the villages of Dobrosloveni, Reşca, Potopin and Frăsinet. Until collectivization, the village (or estate) of Dobrosloveni had a variable geometry (1,200–1,500 ha), following the evolution of the properties of Petrache Obedeanu (circa 1840–1864), Berindei (circa 1865–1877), Berindei-Cealîc (circa 1878–1890) and, finally, Cristide (circa 1891–1947).[8] Nowadays, the only significant name from the above list is that of Cristide, referring either to the "elder *boyars*" Ştefan and Teodora, the *boyars* Dumitru and Marioara or the younger *boyars* Mira, Titu and Liza. "The time of *boyars*" means, therefore, the time of the Cristides.

In 1919, the estate of Dobrosloveni belonged to the Cristides and encompassed 1,200 ha of arable land, pastures, grazing grounds, roads, forest, vegetable gardens, a pond, ravines and escarpments. Of this land, 850 ha belonged to the widow Teodora Cristide (Ştefan Cristide having died) and 350 ha to her son, Dumitru Cristide ("The *Boyar*"). As a consequence of the 1921 agrarian reform, a terrain of 501 ha was expropriated in favor of the villagers who had fought in the First World War. They received about 70 ha of pasture land and 430 ha divided into 180 individual parcels (for a total of about 200 households), measuring each from two to seven *pogoane* (1–3.5 ha).[9] The parcels were not sufficient for the villagers, so they continued to work the property of the *boyars* until collectivization.

Since the late nineteenth century, the population of the village continued to increase: from 475 in 1889, to 849 in 1910, to 975 in 1930 and, finally, to 1,104 in 1941.[10] Until the First World War, they worked on the property of the *boyars*. They cultivated mostly wheat and corn and raised pigs. It is all the more interesting that, in a region favorable to cereal cultivation, the clearest and most expressive memories of "the times of *boyars*" are related to work in the gardens, particularly to the inevitable waterwheel, part of an archaic but nonetheless efficient system of irrigation. Why is the "wheel" so important in Dobrosloveni? On one hand, working the gardens was key to social differentiation, and driving oxen to turn the waterwheel remained a symbol condensing local notions of labor, time, profit, person, necessity and contingency. To put it more clearly, I insist upon the expressiveness of formulations that several persons used when trying to describe, almost mimetically (some even made drawings), what it meant "to pull" and "drive" the oxen at the wheel:

> And I kept on driving and driving the oxen to spin the wheel, till both oxen and we were dizzy! To take water. I asked: "How long do I have to do this?" And my father said: "Keep on driving, keep on driving, keep on driving!" and he showed us the whip… The oldest children, like me, suffered the most. Moles came and made holes in the canals… And I kept on walking and covering over the holes… And we took water out and irrigated, again and again… And then we went to the market with the vegetables and we made money.[11]

In Dobrosloveni, "the waterwheel" is a condensed symbol representing a unique chance: to work, for the first time in one's family history, with the possibility of "getting ahead," "gaining a bit," "recovering" or even "expanding." For those unable to make an advantageous marriage after the 1921 agrarian reform, that is, to acquire 3–5 ha of land for one's household, garden work represented an excellent opportunity (offered by the *boyars*) to gain money to buy more land. For the majority of villagers in Dobrosloveni, the beginning of economic and social ascent is synonymous with the 1921 agrarian reform and with the possibility of renting a small piece of land in the Teslui meadow from the *boyars*.[12]

However, the waterwheel was important for other reasons also. For children in the 1930s, driving the oxen at the wheel meant waking up at sunrise ("they woke us up in early morning, us children, and then they took us to work…"), working hard and doing something repetitive and endless; in other words, "suffering." It is through such actions that the essential values of the parents—hard work, resilience ("keep on driving, keep on driving, keep on driving!"), the division of labor in the family, relations of collaboration with other, equally hardworking, villagers—were passed on to the children. Listening today to memories about the waterwheel, one has the image of an unrepeatable, untranslatable ("young people just don't understand…"), but nonetheless necessary, torture:

> It was hard, but it was as if you didn't feel you were working, if you know what I mean… This is what it meant to work the land, people weren't pretentious like they are today. Nobody forced you: if you wanted, you worked, if not, you didn't… But you couldn't live if you didn't work![13]

It was in "the garden," and not in the field, that children worked in the 1930s. This is why memories of those years focus on this activity. Here, in the gardens, children witnessed their parents trying to do everything in their power to overcome their condition, to get rid of poverty, to move forward—to become and remain "good people." Nevertheless, in those circumstances, their work would have been fruitless unless they obtained help from other "good people," who had infinitely more possibilities to influence their lives, for good or ill. These were the *boyars*, who, fortunately for the villagers from Dobrosloveni, stimulated rather than prevented their striving towards a better life.

2. COLLECTIVIZATION AND "COLLECTIVIZATION"

Before "collectivization," that is, before the interval of September 1958–March 1961, local and regional state representatives resorted to several forms of "persuasion work" in order to make the villagers of Dobrosloveni realize the disadvantages of individual work and the advantages of common work.[14] Some of these ways of forcing people to see reason are well known, and I'll not insist upon them here: consolidating fields, imposing quotas, recodifying social distinctions ("poor peasants," "middle peasants" and "*chiaburi*")—all of them relying on some form of physical or symbolic violence. For my part, I dwell on an aspect of collectivization that is less often discussed: *the gradual mobilization of a significant number of villagers for the project of extending and politicizing the local bureaucracy*. I will try to read the official documents through the eyes of villagers, that is, to understand the potential similarities and distinctions between two ways of classifying and judging people during collectivization. Who joined the collective first and why? How do villagers distribute responsibilities in this regard?

In 1941, the administration of the commune of Dobrosloveni was made up of a mayor, the mayor's assistant, a notary, a secretary, two communal guards and a boundary guard for each of the villages in the commune. In total, there were at most 9–10 local bureaucrats, but only if one also adds the teachers to this category. Beginning in 1950, more and more villagers began to figure as temporary or permanent employees in one of the following positions: thresher delegate, man in charge of the threshing floor (or convoy delegate); member in the Commission (or brigade) for inventory; member in the Commission for control over taxable assets; member in the Commission for the establishment of agricultural revenues; member in the Commission or Subcommission for the Agricultural Register; member in the Control Commission for verifying the accuracy of wine and brandy

declarations; member in the communal guard service; caretaker at the station for artificial insemination; zoopastoral administrator; director and secretary of the Community Center; driver for the Community Center; caretaker for animal reproduction; field guard; member of the guard for controlling exit points from the commune and villages (on the occasion of a "virtual" epidemic of hoof-and-mouth disease); and others.[15]

Although I did not attempt to provide precise statistics on the number of local organizations and their members after 1950, I did manage to identify about 80 persons (excluding the communal guard service and guard volunteers, which would cover the rest of the villagers), most of them men, who, at least for one summer, had to obey or pretend they obeyed the official rules, to assume responsibilities and often to act against their own principles and against their close friends or relatives. Today, some villagers think that these people were more vulnerable to blackmail or more "inclined" to join and work for the collective farm (GAC). However, given that they probably had no choice, their behavior is half justified, half excused. At the beginning, they "didn't know what they were getting into," and wanted to make some money. They thought they wouldn't be "lied to," "baited," or "tempted" by the Party (or the state). At some point, they were trapped, without the possibility of turning back. From the villagers' perspective, working for the state to earn money and keep one's family was a perfectly *excusable* course of action. Nonetheless, doing absolutely anything in order to earn money, such as joining the GAC at a time when the community you belong to sanctions this choice negatively, was less excusable. From this moment, any action (or, more aptly, inaction) must be *justified*, and the justifications I heard referred to the "times," "the Party" or "the state." That is, to different forces that rendered people's possibilities for action negligible, if not absent. In case an activist inspected a household to check if a *chiabur* (or middle peasant) kept for himself some of the produce he was supposed to deliver to the state as quota, he could be partially excused: he must have been "ordered to by the Center." If the mayor, himself a villager too, confiscated a housing plot, it was because he was "ordered to by the Party." If a man regretted agreeing to join the GAC too early, he would ask himself "who the hell made me do it?" He would then explain to others who couldn't quite grasp his reasoning: "We cannot escape these state problems! If it's not possible, there's no other way… there's no other way, it's just not possible!"[16] How better to express the incapacity to act in certain moments of collectivization than by refusing to explain it, miming one's own incapacity, falling back on tautology, or to put it differently, by expressing one's increasing closeness to the GAC through the loss of one's narrative ability?

Thus, according to some of my interlocutors, the first collective members from Dobrosloveni were those who, in their capacity as functionaries, members of commissions and sub-commissions, salaried workers or simply "volunteers," had to understand that if they didn't wish to overly complicate their future, they had to join the GAC. I call these people "captives." Nevertheless, the dominant local

recollection is wholly different: those who joined among the first were the "poor." After a summary analysis of the files, including the petitions to join the GAC, I am tempted to rather accept the first hypothesis. Figuring in one of the administrative positions listed above, rather than being part of the "poor" category, better explains people's courses of action during collectivization and the initiation of the first petitions to join the GAC. In different phases of collectivization, the spectrum of possibilities for action of the guards, drivers, caretakers, delegates, administrators, members of commissions and sub-commissions gradually diminished, especially as they had to fulfill the conditions required by the state for continuing their activities.[17]

As concerns the "poor," there are indeed some extraordinary cases that would recommend their use as scapegoats by all those who consider they did everything possible to refuse or at least delay the moment of joining the GAC. An example frequently employed in Dobrosloveni refers to the members of a family who, before collectivization, "ate polenta with onions"—an index of their poverty. After the first harvest in the GAC they received so much corn they didn't even have space to store it. In an outburst of joy, they organized a small family party where the neighbors heard shouts and cries of exultation among which the following: "I'd kiss the soles [others say "the ass"] of the Collective, for it made us human!" This attitude defied local morality, and the example circulates even today to illustrate an intolerable surplus of happiness manifested at a time when most people were rather unhappy about the collective.[18] The event in question had some aggravating circumstances, among which was the fact that, a few houses down the road, a neighbor had to suffer because of the communist mayor, who had also overstepped the local limits of propriety and decency:

> One year, Ionică had to eat his wheat seed, because he didn't have anything else to eat. Come spring, what is there to sow? "I ate it, as I had nothing else to eat!" He was really old! The Mayor's people hung a tin, a tin placard, tied with string to his back and they wrote on it: "He who does what I did, let him suffer what I do!" The guard from the local council would beat on the tin at the man's back and would shout: "He who does what I did, let him suffer what I do!" And the man would stumble for two or three meters… it's as if I see him again! They took him like this to the end of the village, and then all the way back… he couldn't even walk anymore…

The moral connotation of old Ionică's tortures is amplified because he was the mayor's uncle. According to the villagers, the nephew humiliated his uncle not for disobeying official rules, but to settle a family score: the uncle had always been more affluent, more hardworking or more respected (at the time, these three attributes tended to be synonymous) than the mayor's parents. From this point of view, imputing "poverty" to anyone conspicuously happy during hard times is equivalent to redrawing the boundaries of local morality, and does not explain collectivization in terms of social status.

To put it another way, in this moral story at least, *"poverty"* (just like "wealth" in the case of *boyars*) refers to a relationship with things, but is socially sanctioned as a relationship among people.

3. LAW AND BARGAINING DURING COLLECTIVIZATION

So far, I have tried to clarify some of the local explanations regarding those who joined the collective farm first and the conditions in which they did so. I suggested that, for some, filing the first petitions to join the GAC was less important than the distinction between *captives*—those who "didn't have a choice" and were, as such, redeemable for the local moral community—and the *poor*, persons whose moral condition was and remained problematic. Next, I discuss encounters between authorities and those who—being neither *captives* nor *poor*—believe they succeeded in "buying some time," "bargaining," "haggling," "negotiating," "reaching some understanding," as well as "tricking" and "talking into slowing down" those who carried out the work of persuasion. I try to answer the following questions: Why did persuasion work take so long? Who managed to "buy some time"? How did they do it and what did they obtain? What motives could a recalcitrant invoke at the end of the 1950s, and why were such motives accepted? Inversely, what motives did local authorities invoke when they did "persuasion work"? I will refer not so much to *persons* as to *relationships among persons*. Inspired by Michael Herzfeld,[19] I try to decipher these relationships by tracing the local inventory of motives used to delay joining the GAC. According to Herzfeld, an excuse is effective when it draws from a reserve of local conventions about causality—things that are not necessarily true, not even plausible, but simply accepted by the relevant participants in a dispute.[20] Mastering this reserve of conventions places one in a relationship of "cultural intimacy" with the surrounding world, which means knowing well the local history and the way people conceive of the balance between aspirations and chances and, most importantly, having the ability to manipulate them successfully to one's own benefit, especially in critical moments.

3.1. Reluctance to join the collective

By the summer of 1958, the local and regional authorities in Oltenia had noticeably intensified the work of persuasion. The local activists became more active and insistent, so as to make up for lost time in the race with other, already collectivized, regions of the country. Their work was sustained by commissions made up of activists from outside the locality, who were supposedly more resistant to being drawn into the canons of local reciprocity. These included not only the ordinary giving and taking, actual and potential connections, but also specific ways of talking and interacting: specific allusions, critical comments, satirical remarks, as well as locally significant gestures, which outsiders did not know how to see or hear. Being less privy to the local history, an outsider would simply miss the import of such forms of indirection.[21]

Usually, persuasion teams focused on households, especially on the head of the household. Only rarely did persuasion become a collective affair, on the occasion of popular gatherings organized at the Community Center, the School, or simply a convenient outdoor location. From the very beginning, the power imbalance was glaringly obvious. While state representatives had the majority of assets on their side, villagers had no resource other than time, which they strove to use profitably by appealing to various avoidance strategies they had practiced in past everyday interactions, or by inventing innovative tactics to match the novel encounters.

Obviously, the first option was for men to hide. Women would stay at home and refuse any dialogue with the members of the persuasion teams, hinting thus at the stereotype of masculine authority in the household: "When the teams came, men ran from home, so they wouldn't join the collective, and women stayed behind: 'He's not home! The men aren't here and I'm not getting involved in this stuff!'"[22] Nonetheless, it was practically impossible to sustain this strategy indefinitely, especially since persuasion teams could, at least theoretically, show up on a daily basis. The next option was to avoid discussing anything related to the collective, sometimes by appealing to the local canons of hospitality (see below). Nevertheless, the discussions had to take place at some point. What were the terms of such discussions and how could they be manipulated?

First of all, both sides knew that joining the collective was not at all an option for the villagers. Otherwise, why did they have to be "persuaded"? Second, each speaker started from the premise that the interlocutor was a liar, because, in this particular situation of dialogue, to be the first to unveil your real intentions meant to lose: on the one hand, an activist couldn't actually tell people "you must sign up," because this would have contradicted the official discourse about the free choice available to the potential collective members ("willingly and under no constraint"); on the other hand, villagers couldn't actually state that they didn't approve of the idea of collectivization because they would have exposed themselves to the metonymic trap that automatically turned the opponents of collectivization into adversaries of the "democratic" political regime. In these circumstances, it was crucial for both sides not necessarily to hide their thoughts altogether (the discussion would have been pointless), but to play the persuasion game by exchanging allusions, resorting to indirection, communicating things without really formulating them ("well, I never said anything of the kind…"), to the end of euphemizing personal responsibility, resignifying it, as far as possible, as necessity. One of my informants formulated this idea better than I can:

> D.L.: Let's talk about the persuasion work, in relation to the collective. If people had to be persuaded, then they didn't really want to join up?
> S.A.: They didn't want to, nobody wanted! So, what else…
> D.L.: What did you do when they would come to you for persuasion? Did you allow them into the courtyard? How did you talk to them, what did you tell them? Could you talk straightforwardly with them?

> S.A.: Do you know how it was? You had to look for some reasons, so that *you wouldn't say "I don't want to," you'd say "I can't want to"*… because I'm determined by some… *I'm determined by something!*[23]

Villagers were repeatedly told that "this is the course of things and, sooner or later, we'll have to get there," and, in turn, they answered that they were "determined by *something*"—a "something" that had to be continuously reformulated, depending on the situation, a momentary flash of inspiration, the available opportunities or the latest local developments. But the first opportunity that could be exploited ensued from the very formulation of the problem by those charged with persuasion, who couldn't help placing the collective in the future, even though this was a near, almost inevitable, future. If the establishment of the collective belonged to a future register, one's logical salvation was to claim that one could not sign up *now*. Indeed, it was not so hard to turn down an offer of something that was not present. Let us follow some of these meetings between villagers and state, in its local or regional incarnations.

Ilie B. is a retired man, aged 75, son of middle peasants with a relatively high status during "the times of the *boyars*." He moved upward fairly quickly after collectivization, although, like many other villagers, he tried to postpone joining the collective as long as possible. On multiple occasions, he was visited by the members of several persuasion teams ("commissions") and each time he agreed to discuss with them, in contrast to his father (and other villagers), who tried hard to avoid such encounters. As long as the persuasion teams were made up of local people, Ilie didn't have many difficulties:

> I.B.: They began persuasion work around 1957–1958. And everybody said: "There's no rush, there's enough time for me to sign up!" And they would get away with it this evening! Tomorrow evening again, the day after tomorrow again… Three years went by with this talking…
> D.L.: Were they activists?
> I.B.: They weren't activists, they were from the village, from the village council, president, accountant, secretary, all of them banded together…
> D.L.: Was there none nominated by the party?
> I.B.: They weren't nominated, they were cadres from the commune, the commune's leadership! Three of them were assigned to this part of the village, two to another part…
> • *"Hey, have you signed up for the collective"*
> • *"I haven't!"*
> • *"And what do you say? I'm gonna write your name here… How do I write? How do you sign?"*
> • *"For the moment, you write nothing! For the moment, we wait a while!"*
> We waited until the autumn of 1960.

Later, the mayor himself came to visit Ilie. The result of the meeting did not significantly differ, but there are a few new elements. To begin with, Ilie made a point of being more hospitable, possibly to dampen the mayor's enthusiasm somewhat, reminding him that he is first a local and only then a mayor. Moreover, he was careful to assure the mayor that he was not, in principle, opposed to collectivization, but suggested he would only sign up together with the other villagers, and not before them, that is, "against the tide." In comparison to the first meeting, Ilie was less categorical:

> I.B.: One evening the mayor himself came here, around 1958–1959:
> • *"Hey B., what are you doing, aren't you going to join the collective?"*
> • *"What the hell, you came to my house to bullshit me? You came here to drink a glass of wine!"*
>
> There were three guys, together with the secretary. I slaughtered a chicken, my wife put it on the grill… We talked and talked all kind of things… We put the wine on the table, we ate the food, and then:
> • *"What do you say? Sign up now, or else they'll kick me out of the mayor's office!"*
> • *"So what, let them do it! I'm not going to join the collective… I won't! Pay attention to what I'm saying:* today I'm not signing up! But remember: there's no collective in this village without me! Without me, there's no collective!*"*
> • *"Sign up now!"*
> • *"I won't!"*
>
> He came again and again… Oh, those times! Those times made these things happen! When December 1960 came… December 20… in 6–7 days… almost everybody had signed up for the collective! I did it too, and everyone else joined the collective!

I wish to make two points about this encounter. First, there are some reasons to think that most of its unfolding consisted of slaughtering a chicken, putting it on the grill, "talking all kind of things," drinking and eating. Ilie and the mayor, villagers and persuasion teams, were doing "persuasion work" of different sorts. Especially during persuasion encounters, "collectivization" was a limited topic: there were minutes, hours, days and even months in which activists had to talk about a relatively finite set of topics.[24] Today, elders who experienced collectivization can hardly reproduce what they were told. Instead, they mock the activists: "You, people, how you can think… because, look… we'll give you… all that you wish! It'll be just as if the land is yours!"[25] For Ilie, as for many other villagers, it was relatively easy to fill in the empty spaces.

The second point concerns the organization of Ilie's tenses, specifically the phrase he wants the mayor to pay attention to: "Today I'm not signing up! But remember: without me, the collective won't be set up in this village! Without me,

there'll be no collective!" This is part of a defensively designed scenario. While analyzing a somewhat similar "defensively designed story," Harvey Sacks notices "the arrangement of its pasts in such a fashion as to have, in the middle of it, a kind of present, that is, its pasts lead up to a present from which a future is looked towards…"[26] Ilie does a slightly different tense manipulation. By bringing the mayor's future into the present, he manages to make the impossible claim that he has already joined the collective, even though he hasn't yet signed up!

Finally, let us follow Ilie's meeting with a more special "commission" of "activists," that is, people who "know how to talk" and with whom one needs to be careful, otherwise one might "speak out of turn and then get into a mess."[27] It is quite remarkable how Ilie manages to relay the message we already know, manipulating tenses as precisely as an… activist. (It is ironical that he later became a kind of local activist himself.) By the end of this exchange, just like the most talented rhetoricians of fairs and markets ("Look, I'm not asking for a million, give me only 700 thousand…"), he constructs a fictive transaction only to negate it and to reach, after a short detour, exactly the same point that he had actually targeted: of course, he will join the collective, but only when everyone else will do the same:

> I.B.: There were others, who came by 1960, six people, they weren't from here… These were activists!
> D.L.: Were they from Caracal?
> I.B.: From Caracal, from Corabia, I don't know exactly from where:
> • *"Comrade B., why do you mess things up for us?"* That's how one of them approached me.
> • *"What do you mean sir?"*
> • *"Why don't you sign up for the collective?"*
> • *"Well… Now, that you came to address this problem… Look, I want to sign up*! I… it's the first time that such a grand commission, like yours, comes to ask me if I want to sign up! *I will sign up! I have 3.25 ha, oxen and a cart, a plow, a harrow, and so on. I will sign up for the collective and,* when we'll start to work, *I'll work along with everyone else!"*
> • *"Well… and how do you see the problem?"*
> • *"I think it's a very good problem! I am convinced it is! Things will work out fine for us!* If everybody joins the collective, I'm not going to sit by the side and bargain! *That's out of the question!"*

In Dobrosloveni and, as far as I know, in many other villages in Oltenia, tense manipulation was one of the most felicitous strategies used by the villagers who tried to postpone, as long as possible, joining the collective. Related to this was a second strategy, namely "talking on behalf of the village." At different times, the persuasion teams received similar answers from villagers avoiding collectiviza-

tion: "not now"; "I'll see what I'll do!"; "let us wait and see…"; "there's enough time"; "why me?"; "after the others sign up."[28] Nonetheless, almost without exception the ultimate reason invoked in all of these cases was the following: "*if I sign up (now), people will burn down my house!*"[29] Villagers brought up this motive towards both local and regional authorities. Here are some examples:

> S.A.: They would call me at the village council and I'd say to them: "People are going to burn down my house!" There was this fear that others are going to set your house on fire! I was afraid, afraid of the other people that they'll set it afire! They set my house on fire!
> D.L.: This means they weren't happy about the collective!
> S.A.: They weren't, but they wouldn't show it! You didn't know who was who!
>
> * * *
>
> D.L.: But some signed up earlier than others. Why?
> I.B.: Do you know the policy at that time, when very few signed up? They would say: "Look, I'll sign up, but don't tell anyone, because they'll set my house on fire!" and that's why very few signed up!
> D.L.: Well, and who set houses on fire?
> I.B.: Nobody did, people weren't hateful, but they were afraid to be the first to do it: "Why should I be the first to sign up? Let others do it, not me!"
>
> * * *
>
> A.B.: One day, the mayor of Caracal came here, at a meeting at the School. He gave a speech:
> - *"Comrades, the Party will… We decided to establish a GAC! I recommend everyone join this GAC! Please don't try to deceive us! What do you say, you over there?"*
> - *"I'll sign up, mister mayor, but not right now… People will set my house on fire!"*
>
> That was the mentality at that time! And the mayor kept silent…

These statements are less interesting for their factual value than for their indexical value. Not only do they render visible the villagers' intentions regarding their joining the collective, but they also show the kind of excuses that were accepted at the time. But how is it possible that at the end of the 1950s one could refuse to join the collective by invoking the fear of one's house being set on fire? How was it that such a motive could be accepted? What kind of social relations are to be glimpsed beyond them? Were these social relations compatible with the official sociology?

The most obvious answer is to be found precisely in the structure of the encounters between persuasion teams and villagers. Despite their differences, both parties agreed on the point that "the village was hostile to collectivization." The

crucial step in overcoming this hostility was, according to the official sociology, to concentrate most of the persuasion efforts on "middle peasants." However, this category proved elusive in everyday village life. Instead, villagers acted as "ordinary peasants" most interested in practical questions that were never convincingly answered by any member of the persuasion teams. Below I discuss the nature of these practical concerns.

3.2. Provisions upon joining the collective

The second document of the *File of the Founding of GAC "Viața Nouă" Dobrosloveni*, dated February 23, 1961 (the GAC was to be established on March 8), contains an interesting detail in one of the explanatory notes:

> The founding document contains more names than the nominal register. In this situation we can show that those checked off in red had statutory petitions. Those who aren't checked off in red had *petitions containing some provisions* [my emphasis] which will be discussed in the general meeting.[30]

This document refers, quite clearly, to the petitions for joining the GAC, which must have raised some procedural problems if they required further analysis in the next general meeting. In what follows, I will discuss these "petitions containing provisions."[31] From a formal point of view, the majority of the entry petitions written by the villagers from Dobrosloveni are almost identical:

The undersigned…
Owning a plot of…

I ask to be received…
with the following…
We Fight for Peace!

Many petitions are written by the same hand. Nonetheless, some are slightly different, and their originality is found on the back of the sheet, where the subjectivity of the potential members of the collective is much more visible in the guise of *provisions*.

What could these people possibly communicate, beyond what they had to, namely, that they signed up "willingly and under no constraint"? How did they do it? They formulated *conditions*, and did so in a style that counterbalanced the formalism of the bureaucratic language, proposing another set of eternal truths, as obvious for the villagers as the Official Truth was for the bureaucrats: "I mention that…", "I reserve the right to," "I want to be given…", "I want to have reserved…", "I agree to be debited…" Ironically, after writing what he had to on the back of the petition, one villager signs in the spirit of the time: "Leadership Council" (see provision b)![32] Below are some examples:

a) *On condition* that, if I am to join the GAC, I am to be given a house lot for one of my boys. The present petition *will enter* into effect on March 1, 1961.
[*signature*]
b) I mention that my horses and cart are *to be left in use* until August 1, 1961, when I am obliged to bring them to the GAC.
Leadership Council,
[*signatures of family members*]
c) I mention that I will sell the *oxen* I have and I commit myself to buy *1 (one) ox* for the GAC.
[*signature*]
d) I mention that I want my daughter *to be given* 1 (one) hectare from the GAC perimeter should she get married.
[*signature*]
e) I mention that [in case] my daughter marries *someone who isn't GAC member* and who has land, I am *to be given* 1 ha.
[*signature*]
f) [In case] my daughter marries someone who isn't GAC member,
I reserve the right to request 1 ha from the surface that I possess.[33]
[*signature*]
g) I mention that I wish *to have reserved for me* the surface of 2.50 ha from the surface indicated above for my subsistence as I don't have other sources of income until I can get a job. *Once I get a job, I will deliver the rest of the land to the collective.*
[*signature*]
h) I mention that I wish *to have my 7 pogoane of land distributed as follows:* 2 to my son C.C., who is legitimately married and 2 to my son V.C. who is not married, being in the military, in case he'll marry a girl who is not in the GAC.
[*signature*]
i) I wish my cart and oxen *to have left in my use,* to make bricks for my daughter's house. One ox is *to be left to me,* so I can get a cow to support myself, since I am ill.
[*signature*]
j) I mention that besides the surface indicated, *I leave* another 0.30 ha, which is cultivated part lucerne, part barley. *I accept to be debited* for the oxen which I sold before joining the GAC.
[*signature*]
k) I mention that I borrowed the sum of 3200 lei from the Bank of Craiova in order to buy the two oxen I possess. *If the GAC Dobrosloveni commits to paying off the debt I still have to the Bank,* the oxen remain in the GAC and if not, the People's Council should allow me to sell the oxen and pay my debt to the Bank.
[*signature*]

l) But the surface of 0.57 ha *remains for my use,* as I am old and unable to see at all with my left eye.
[*signature*][34]

Thus, at the moment of joining the collective, that is, after they had understood that the balance of forces on the national political scene was not at all to their advantage, some villagers made a point of correcting, once more, the terms of the transaction proposed by the state. To the formula used by the representatives of the communist state in relation to "property" ("living and dead inventory" [*inventar viu şi mort*]) they added an essential element that I would call "symbolic inventory," that is, the totality of rules and practices, which in association with property, ensured the biological and social reproduction of the family. For many villagers, the idea of holding everything "collectively" left a host of questions unanswered. While less important for the state, these questions were crucial for the members of each family: how are my children going to get married? How shall I manage to build a house for them? Who am I going to be, in relation to the other villagers? And, most importantly, how shall I survive now and later, when I am old? This is, I believe, the main message of the provisions formulated by the villagers on the back of their petitions, which I will continue to analyze (even though summarily) from a functional point of view as well as with an eye to content and style.

First of all, what are these provisions? Are they the testaments of people who wished to assure their descendants that they did everything in their power to bequeath them a reasonable inheritance? Are they maybe desperate attempts to adjust, at least partially, the conditions of an unequal exchange according to the logic of reciprocity (in other words, "to turn the state into a debtor")? Intelligent attempts to use official documents in *support* of local points of view ("testimonies") about the illegitimacy of collectivization, or from a more practical point of view, as potential *evidence* in a future process of restitution? My response, a way to avoid simplification, is: some of each, and more. Today, only a few are alive who remember (or whom I reminded) about the provisions to the petitions to join the collective, and most of their explanations are usually succinct—"*they wrote that out of spite, so nobody would say they willingly gave up their land!*"—and seem to have been formulated retrospectively. There is, however, a more plausible interpretation according to which the provisions are not, in fact, provisions, but signs of mistrust in the local authorities, who, being interested in speeding up the rhythm of collectivization, let the villagers believe that they could keep part of their land, their oxen or their vineyard if only they signed up for the collective with a significant portion of their assets. While some trusted these promises,[35] others tried to legalize them, using the free space on the back of the petitions.

The provisions are also interesting from the viewpoint of content and style. On one hand, they indicate once more the kinds of motives that could be invoked

in writing in the constitutive acts of the future GAC, and not just orally, during the "work of persuasion." While in the presence of the members of persuasion teams, villagers could appeal to the locality principle, or, in other words, the force of horizontal social relations ("people will set my house on fire"), in the official documents of the newly established GAC they call forth arguments about the temporal, biological and social reproduction of the family—that is, a way of thinking about kinship in the context of the local history of work and exchange relations. To support this idea, I cite from another provision, which is no longer testament, testimony or jural argument but the condensed version of the social history of a family:

> I mention that I am keeping for myself 0.18 ha of courtyard, 0.25 ha of vineyard, plus a 0.25 ha housing lot, which terrain belonged to my brother-in-law, I.T., according to our understanding, when he gave me my house-plot and carts, that is, the third part of what I was entitled to. Being old, I sold the oxen I had and with the sum of 4,000 lei I bought furniture for my daughter, according to the understanding we had upon her marriage. Besides those above, I contracted 500 kg wheat and 500 kg corn, for which I cashed 450 lei, a sum that I deposit, together with the present petition, at the GAC, which will be responsible for the contract.[36]

Finally, a few words about the style of these provisions, which might give some idea of the horizon of expectations of the villagers who joined the collective in the early 1960s when, according to official chronology, the process of collectivization was nearing its end and the state offensive was close to its apogee. From this point of view, several formulations—some extremely precise, others less so—are quite interesting for what they reveal about villagers from Dobrosloveni (and probably others) and their thoughts on the possibility of withholding things from the collectivization project.

First, several of the provision writers still imagined the prospect of marriages between collectivist and non-collectivist youth—see above, provisions (e), (f) and (h). Therefore, the project of collectivization could have been only a partial, and not a total one, as it turned out to be. Secondly, despite the power wielded by state representatives, some villagers did not hesitate to situate themselves on an equal footing, at least regarding some aspects of the act of filling out petitions and their provisions. A few took the approach of straight formulations, writing in clear print, as in the provisions above: "*I want to be given* a house-plot, the horses and cart *are to be left* in my use, my daughter *is to be given* a hectare or I want *to reserve* 2.50 ha," as if the terms of the conversation they carried with the state were sensibly equal. Others produced what retrospectively could appear as instances of involuntary humor, if they weren't traces of a sublime ability to manipulate verb tenses ("*I reserve the right to solicit* [later—note D.L.] *1 ha from the surface that I possess* [now—note D.L.]") and to practice the rhetoric of imprecision precisely where it was necessary ("I will sell the *oxen* I have and I

commit myself to buy *1 (one) ox* for the GAC"). Were they aware of the implications? What did they think about the possibility of influencing collectivization, and how did they generally see themselves in relation to the communist state? In what follows I try to answer these questions and others formulated earlier.

4. COMMENTS

> I'm telling you something that *nobody else can tell you*! When I went to the Local Council to sign, I was taken inside and this guy, I.C., was behind the door. Inside there were the mayor, M.D., F.T. and some other guy, I don't know who… As soon as I entered, I.C., that dog, slapped me so hard that my hat fell on the floor… "What's wrong with you, why did you hit me?" "Who hit you? Nobody did…" A fool… The mayor poured a glass of brandy and pushed it towards me, to drink: "Take a glass of brandy, Alexandru!" I was afraid *they would poison me*: "I don't want to, Mr. Mayor, I don't drink brandy!" "Come on, Alexandru, you can't say no to a glass of brandy! Look, I'll take a sip first!" I think *he knew why I wouldn't drink*… Well, I drank that brandy, I signed up and I started to go, but he poured another glass, asking me to drink that one too. I think he wanted me to get tipsy, so I wouldn't tell others how things were, and I didn't drink anymore, I told them "well, have a good day, now I'm going," when, from behind the door, I.C. slapped me again, on the ear. I almost went deaf! I say: "I.C., I didn't think you were like that!" And the mayor says: "Come on, Alexandru, let it go, it's so you remember how you joined the collective!"[37]

One of the potentially surprising things in Dobrosloveni now is that although people talk at length about land, agricultural associations or the reduced possibilities of making a living from agriculture, collectivization seems to be a closed, if not forgotten, topic.

When asking about collectivization, I often got the impression that I bother, or that I demand too much from people who would rather exhaust the subject in a few vague phrases, without ever going into details: "How should it have been? It was hard! It always was hard!" "It's gone, let's see how we'll manage from now on!" As for the violence associated with collectivization—well, it happened, just as in other places, but why would anybody want "to rake up the past"? Local resistance? Nothing special, only a few isolated cases.

During my research, I did nonetheless find out, almost by chance, about several cases when the authorities employed physical violence against villagers. At least four men underwent the same "ritual of slaps and brandy" that Alexandru had to go through. The fear of poisoning speaks volumes about the morality of collectivization. In some cases, members of the persuasion teams consumed or "defiled" part of people's food reserves; a man was savagely beaten in the cellar of his own house, where he was offering wine to his uninvited guests from the

People's Council; another was slapped hard, right in front of his family, by a woman employed at the Council. Men were more exposed to violence and dishonor and thus it is not surprising that they would be more tempted than women to euphemize or simply "forget" the ugliest episodes of collectivization. I would not want to over-interpret these episodes and their effects if I were not suggesting that "forgetting" can be understood positively, as a form of "memory," and not as its antithesis. People "forget" the violence that contradicts the categories of ordinary thinking, or they refuse to integrate what would otherwise destroy them socially (extreme examples are slaves, Gulag and Holocaust survivors, as well as victims of torture or rape). I think that, in cases such as collectivization, forgetting is as much a favor to oneself as a strategic positioning towards the agents of violence.

More than anything, collectivization challenged a set of implicit moral criteria about what it meant to be human, why and how one must work and what one should expect from those in power, especially when going through critical times. Villagers understood that their chances of adhering to these ideals were rapidly diminishing as the communist state intruded more into their daily lives. Some felt incapable of action and, because they "didn't have any choice," they had to join the collective sooner than they wanted to. From their fellow villagers' point of view, the actions of these people (the captives) had grounds for moral justification. Others (the morally poor) suggested that they joined the collective voluntarily, so their morality was questioned. In contrast to these two categories, the majority of villagers from Dobrosloveni—"ordinary peasants"—strove to delay as much as possible the moment of signing up for the collective or, when they did sign up, they endeavored to redefine the very idea of "collective." To this end, they used a rich inventory of tactics and strategies, interpellating state representatives either in official terms, so as to beat the state at its own game, or in local terms, which were almost impossible to reject, to the extent that state representatives were themselves, up to a point, members of the local (moral) communities.

Retrospectively, it is precisely these episodes of interaction between villagers and state that are valued the most. Villagers realized that, from time to time, they could influence the course of future events, if only a little. To put it a differently, they realized that one can gain out of losing, as some people from Dobrosloveni enjoy saying. Even more, they realized that one of the conditions of social survival is to strategically forget the most violent parts of collectivization, that is, precisely those moments when they couldn't find any way of reacting to state actions. I think this is a form of "forgetting the state," or holding onto an image of a "state" that is at least acceptable. Finding it impossible the avoid the state, villagers had to at least maintain some channels of communication. Even if in an oblique manner, this was a form of asking the state to live up to its pretenses, that is, to act as the holder of a monopoly on *legitimate violence*, reserving for itself the possibility of keeping accounts of and answering, when need be, to forms of *illegitimate violence*.

In comparison to other victims of communism who managed to make public their stance towards the past under the motto "to forgive but never forget," I believe the villagers of Dobrosloveni and others like them, who do not participate in the formulation of the dominant public discourses on morality, are a bit paradoxical, as they forget but never forgive. I have in mind here a form of strategic forgetting coupled to an obvious desire to settle accounts, which has been especially visible the past twenty years as the patrimony of the former collective farms was rapidly destroyed, former activists were socially marginalized, land was decisively reclaimed and kept (sometimes despite its lack of productivity), local bureaucrats were humiliated daily, and the new meta-narratives of the state were met with structural mistrust. While space does not allow me to develop all these forms of "settling accounts," I will focus on a single one. Shortly after 1989, the problem of agrarian reform figured high on the public agenda, especially due to the initiatives coming from below and newly established "historical" parties (the main political parties before the communist regime). They engaged in intense debates regarding the terms of the reform. It is important to remember that the reform was conceived as "restitution" and "decollectivization," rather than "(re)allocation," "privatization," or something else. Equally significant are the countless actions at the local level to further specify the terms of the reform, that is, for villagers to get their land back on exactly the same location as before. This is a good indication of the felicity of collectivization as a project: peasants' consciousness remained hopelessly "false," although they were collectivized for about 30 years.[39]

The main thesis of this paper is that, in the long term, collectivization was a process that brought together two categories of people with structurally and temporally different possibilities of action: villagers and state representatives. Without the villagers' contribution, the collective would have been a different institution, probably closer to the ideal of total institutions. For the fact that things happened differently, that is, that the communist regime manifested, from time to time, a "humane side," one should thank all those involved in daily acts of resistance, bargaining or negotiation, and not glorify some intrinsic qualities of the communist project.

NOTES

1 Henceforth, I will use quotation marks every time I refer to "collectivization" in this local sense.

2 I obtained the economic version of this horror of proselytism from the owner of a kiosk in Dobrosloveni: "If I go now to someone to make him an offer from which I have something to lose, he's suspicious, he thinks along these lines: 'What interest is at stake here? It can't be, he must have something to gain!" You see? I can't make someone an offer from which both of us would gain something… the guy is already thinking "Aaa, who knows what intentions he has… who knows what he'll gain… he wants to trick me, I can only lose!, you see?" (Nicolae M., 53 years old, male, kiosk owner.)

3 Marian T., 45 years old, male, agricultural worker.

4 I hope this essay is sufficient proof that I do not want to euphemize the violence exercised by the communist regime during the process of collectivization (I thank Smaranda Vultur, who clarified for me the possibility of such a misunderstanding). As a macro-process, collectivization is not at all the result of a "negotiation" between villagers and the state. Nonetheless, in particular settings, villagers had some say in how the project of collectivization was realized. On such occasions they understood what any man trapped in a critical situation wishes to understand, namely that "the devil is not as black as he is painted" and that, now and then, things can be arranged to mutual benefit.

5 To go beyond the linguistic sphere, I mention here some non-verbal possibilities, such as: facial expression and certain body postures; the reproduction of local social hierarchies, despite the hegemonic discourse of equality; re-signifying "theft from the collective" as a legitimate practice, in contrast to theft from private property. On theft from the collective, see Oana Mateescu, *Making Persons, Placing Objects: Narratives of Theft in Southern Romania* (MA Thesis, Central European University Budapest, 2002).

6 I share Katherine Verdery's indecision (this volume) concerning the redefinition of the validity criteria of the conversation between villagers and state. On the one hand, these criteria were established by the state, and many villagers internalized some of the official categories, at least for pragmatic reasons. On the other hand, villagers always knew how to introduce innovative elements, part of a rich local repertoire of motifs. In the long run, bureaucrats were successful to the extent that they managed to progressively expropriate forms of local knowledge, reclaiming them later for what would become the hybrid of national communism.

7 If all these do not happen on the spot, or if they happen otherwise than suggested by the dichotomous model of "domination and resistance" (action-reaction), they do not thus become irrelevant, at least not in the medium or long term. For a critique of the simplistic arguments about domination vs. resistance, which nonetheless fails to solve the problem of maintaining the dichotomy as such, see Sherry B. Ortner, "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal," *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 37 (1995) 1, 173–193.

8 Ştefan N. Ricman et al., *Contribuțiuni la monografia județului Romanați* (Craiova: Ramuri S.A., 1928), 112; Teodora Carigoiu, *Monografia comunei Dobrosloveni* (MS, 1989), 14.

9 DJAN Olt, fond "Prefectura Romanați," file 15/1919, "Acte referitoare la exproprierea moşiei doamnei Teodora Cristide, Dobrosloveni."

10 Const. I. Locusteanu, *Dicționarul geografic al județului Romanați* (Bucharest: Stabilimentul grafic Socecu & Teclu, 1889), 89; Sabin Manuilă (coord.), *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decemvrie 1930*, vols. II and IX (Bucharest Institutul Central de Statistică, 1931); DJAN Olt, fond "Prefectura Romanați," file 97/1941, "Lucrări privitoare la executarea ordinului Ministerului Afacerilor Interne," no. 37/A-1941.

11 Maria T., 76 years old, agricultural worker. I met with a similar genre of expressiveness in a woman who, after the former county of Romanați (to which Dobrosloveni pertained) was disbanded, had to reach her husband in the new county capital of Slatina, where he had been mobilized. She had to cover 50 km on foot: "And we we-eee-ent on

foot, a-aaa-all the way to Slatina!" See Sorin Avram, *Reconstituirea identității regionale—cazul Romanați* (Lucrare de licență, Universitatea Bucureşti, Facultatea de Jurnalism şi Ştiințele Comunicării, 1994), 25.

12 After the First World War, the *boyars* began cultivating the Teslui meadow with the help of Bulgarian gardeners. Gradually, the villagers also got involved in garden work: in exchange for a sum of money, they cultivated small plots of land with vegetables that they marketed in the neighboring town of Caracal.

13 Maria T., 76 years old, agricultural worker.

14 "Persuasion" should be taken as the euphemism for a spectrum of actions whose opportunity has been decided on the spot: from offer to request to warning to threat and physical violence.

15 DJAN Olt, fond "Prefectura Romanați," file 97/1941, "Fişa comunei Dobrosloveni, Romanați, 1941"; Arhiva Primăriei Dobrosloveni, file 5/1944, "Decizii ale Primăriei Comunei Dobrosloveni 1942–1944;" Arhiva Primăriei Dobrosloveni, "Registru decizii 1944–1962."

16 Ilie B., 75 years old, man, former functionary GAC and CAP "Viața Nouă" Dobrosloveni.

17 Arhiva Primăriei Dobrosloveni, file 5/1961, "Documentele de constituire a GAC Viața Nouă din Dobrosloveni şi satul Potopini pe anul 1961."

18 (Local) Morality in this paper means anything but a preexisting set of rules or norms of conduct that people follow closely. Norms and rules cannot tell one how to follow them. Inspired by ethnomethodologists, specifically Harold Garfinkel, I rather consider that it is only in and through the following of rules that the rules themselves come to be noticed and to have coherence. See Harold Garfinkel, *Ethnomethodology's Program: Working out Durkheim's Aphorism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 197–218.

19 Michael Herzfeld, "It takes one to know one: Collective resentment and mutual recognition among Greeks in local and global contexts," in Richard Fardon, ed., *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1995), ch. 6. Also, Michael Herzfeld, "The etymology of excuses: Aspects of rhetorical performance in Greece," *American Ethnologist*, 9 (1982), 644–663.

20 Herzfeld, "It takes one to know one," 130.

21 Joy Hendry and C. W. Watson, *An Anthropology of Indirect Communication* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 3.

22 Maria T., 76 years old, woman, agricultural worker.

23 "I'm determined by something" (*sint determinat de ceva*) is as noticeably awkward in Romanian as it is in English. A better translation would have been "I'm compelled by something." The option to translate this phrase literally should be taken as a way of doing justice to a villager's visible effort to deliberately force the limits of everyday Romanian. By using the vocabulary of determinism somewhat improperly, he tried to express as exactly as possible his (and other villagers') strategy towards persuasion teams.

24 On "rich topics" vs. "limited topics" and corresponding conversational implications, see Harvey Sacks, *Lectures of Conversation*, 2 vols. (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), vol. 1, 390.

25 Tita A. 80 years old, female, agricultural worker.

26 Sacks, *Lectures of Conversation,* vol. 2, 454.

27 These are Ilie B.'s evaluations and not mine. I would insist that the activist is a "good talker," "loud-mouthed" and "smooth tongued," especially considering that, beginning with the 1950s, the figure of the activist represents an important symbol of state intrusion into the lives of villagers. While being moral means recognizing the correspondences between words and things (it says that the beginning of speech is this: "good day," "good evening," "how's the weather," etc.), the activist, as incarnation of the principle of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, is the antithesis of morality: he lies with impunity, he's serious while joking and laughs when talking seriously. It isn't safe to trust the activist and when meeting him, it's better to remain silent. In this context, the figure of the activist stands as a metonym of the communist state in formation. The moral implications are evident.

28 I am certain that almost identical answers can be found in other villages in the region. See also an excellent novel (minus the euphemistic treatment of violence, understandable for a book published before 1989) on collectivization in a village in Oltenia, Jean Băileşteanu, *Drum în tăcere – Ani de Jăgăduintă* (Craiova: Scrisul Românesc, 1987), 199–200, 206, 212.

29 Other relatively pertinent reasons were: "people will curse me" and, in the case of elderly people, "I can't work in the collective."

30 Arhiva Primăriei Dobrosloveni, file 5/1961, Inv. no. 5/961, Poz. no. 154/4, "Documentele de constituire a GAC Viaţa Nouă din Dobrosloveni şi satul Potopini pe anul 1961."

31 I counted approximately 30 such "explicit provisions," most of them inscribed on the back of petitions. However, there are almost 80 petitions with "implicit provisions," which are all the more interesting.

32 The irony I signal is an added (and bitter) irony. It is an effect of the retrospective evaluation of the situation. When joining the GAC, most villagers had to draft the first petition (and provision) in their life. We should not laugh at the results. They realized there were procedures for drafting petitions and provisions. The villager who drafted the provision at issue, then signed "Leadership Council," and only after that spelled his own name, had probably seen an official document that was signed similarly. He either assumed that that was the proper procedure for signing petitions, or imagined that such a supplementary formulation would add extra weight to his petition (in fact, to his provision).

33 Others reserve the right to ask for up to 2.5 ha.

34 Arhiva Primăriei Dobrosloveni, file 5/1961, "Documentele de constituire a GAC Viaţa Nouă din Dobrosloveni şi satul Potopini pe anul 1961."

35 Some of them lost forever those things they hadn't included in the petitions to join the collective, especially vineyards and the terrain where they were situated.

36 Arhiva Primăriei Dobrosloveni, file 5/1961, "Documentele de constituire a GAC Viaţa Nouă din Dobrosloveni şi satul Potopini pe anul 1961."

37 Alexandru B., circa 75 years old, agricultural worker.

38 This resonates with some of the arguments of Katherine Verdery's *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

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Persuasion Techniques and Community Reactions in Corund (the Hungarian Autonomous Region)

JULIANNA BODÓ

> No, there was no resistance here… We heard that in other villages people fled in droves, that they hid for a while. In some other places they resisted and the police were brought in to calm things down… but none of that happened here. We heard that some people were threatened… People talked about all this but only in private, because some had been arrested and beaten up, but that was earlier, before the collectives were set up… Nobody knows exactly what happened; anyway, such cases were rare. Here they used fear to persuade people, so that when the time to set up the GAC came and we had to sign up for it, everybody signed up. By that time everybody had been persuaded…
>
> B.A., 59 years old, male, craftsman, son of a middle-income farmer. August 19, 2001.

Was the change in property regime as straightforward and uneventful as this 59 year-old man claimed? Did everything really go so smoothly? It is true that there were no bitter conflicts, nor were there public trials or atrocities. The planners of collectivization did not refer to Corund (Korond in Hungarian) as a "problem case." In retrospect, one can argue that nothing special happened in Corund. Nonetheless, upon closer scrutiny, several cues alert the researcher to processes that require further examination. For instance, the voices of people interviewed still trembled when they referred to collectivization, forty years later. In the same vein, there was overwhelming agreement that the practices and ideology on which the GAC (collective farm) was predicated had been disastrous and a grievous error. Moreover, during interviews people tended to repress certain memories; they could not or did not want to answer certain questions. Consequently, we can legitimately ask if we can label "unimportant" events that, four decades later, cannot be narrated with a calm voice but instead seem to stir up so much feeling. How did "persuasion" take place? How is it possible that those "significant" events triggered such a profound reaction? Were there other events that merit further scrutiny?

The village of Corund is part of the commune of Corund. Situated in the western part of Harghita county, the commune is composed of five villages, of which

Corund village is the largest and serves as the commune center. The other four villages—Atia (Atyha), Fântâna Brazilor (Fenyőkút), Valea lui Pavel (Pálpataka), and Calonda (Kalonda)—are smaller, and lie on the outskirts of the commune. The 2002 census recorded a total of 6,180 inhabitants in the commune. Of this total, the village represented 75 percent of households and 80 percent of the population (4,944). Corund has always been among the largest villages in that area. Together, Corund, Fântâna Brazilor and Valea lui Pavel numbered 2,202 inhabitants in 1850; during collectivization their number increased to 3,600, most of them ethnic Hungarians. The Roma population has increased since the late 1960s—although the 2002 census recorded only 260 Roma, the real figure is much higher. In terms of religious affiliation, 75 percent of the population is Roman Catholic and 25 percent Unitarian. Currently, most people work in pottery or trade, and only very rarely in agriculture. In the 1950s, the opposite was true, with most of the population working in agriculture. The village is located in a mountainous region where it is hard to find a flat area large enough for a football field, as locals put it. Arable land is of such bad quality that it is not worth growing corn on it, and grapes never ripen there either.

In 1962 only a handful of people owned more than 10 ha of land in Corund. Most families owned 3–4 ha of land, divided into 10–15 smaller parcels in different locations. Agriculture was practiced for household needs, not for the market. Almost a third of the families worked in pottery, especially during the winter, producing kitchen pots and decorative objects. Those who owned little land worked in pottery during the winter and in agriculture during the summer. Secretly, they hoped that their village would be spared by collectivization.

In the mid 1950s, the neighboring villages saw the establishment of GACs, but Corund came late to the game while the change in property form proceeded full-speed around it. The small pottery concerns were nationalized, and Party members from the region were active, agitating about the "rich." The march toward collectivization led to the establishment of local TOZ associations that constantly threatened the so-called *chiaburi.* In 1961, the villagers' hopes were shattered when the decision was made to finally set up a GAC in Corund. This decision rapidly became reality, and by 1962, collectivization was declared complete in the whole country.

The villagers blamed the formation of their collective on the local leadership. In their opinion, had it not been for their leaders' insistence, the district cadres would have forgotten about Corund. It was said that the village doctor, who was well connected at the district level, was eager for praise and personally asked the higher Party echelons to include Corund in the collectivization plan. Everything happened fast, within a year, which makes it hard to reconstitute the exact facts. At that time, the final countdown for collectivization had already begun. We can see this period in a different light, however, and argue that collectivization happened overnight in Corund only because it had been prepared over a long period of time through a series of events that deserve closer scrutiny. In other words, although the very establishment of the GAC did not take long, it had been preceded by an intensive, sustained campaign over several years.

We can distinguish three stages in the collectivization of Corund. The first stage began before 1950 and featured a small group of committed activists who would subsequently play a crucial role in establishing the GACs. The second period spans the early to mid 1950s, when requisition quotas, chiaburization, and the creation of TOZ associations signaled the gradual transformation of property.[1] The third period saw the actual founding of the GAC.[2]

The few archival sources available offer limited insight into the process of collectivization and its stages, for they contain little about daily life in that period. For this purpose, extensive fieldwork, immersion in the local community and in-depth discussions with people who witnessed those events were key methodological tools. They help the researcher reconstitute past events from multiple fragments. That memory is fragmentary is not unusual, considering that people did not talk about the events leading to collectivization for several decades. Nobody asked them to remember those times, nor would it have been easy to do so under the dictatorship. As a result, their recollections are disjointed and partial. In this study, I try to assemble the fragments in order to show both the familiar aspects of the collectivization process and also some aspects not recognized until now. To give a satisfactory answer to the questions of how events that people present as "unremarkable" had such a profound impact on them, we must investigate how different levels of interaction were intertwined. During my fieldwork, it became apparent that people had never identified with the ideology and practice of collectivization, or with its leaders—a fact that requires us to investigate the relationship between the proponents of collectivization and those who had to accept it. The former group includes activists, most of them non-natives of Corund, who initiated the process of collectivization and led it; the latter group, much more numerous, consists of the villagers. To begin, I will analyze the public relations between the leadership and the locals in order to reveal the strategies, formed at the district center, used to persuade or force people to sign up for GAC membership. I will then try to capture the invisible side of these relationships, through sometimes formal and sometimes occasional and informal interactions. Finally, I will analyze how these two levels interacted and what effect they had on the villagers' opinions and behaviors.

1. PUBLIC RELATIONS, PUBLIC MEETINGS

In what follows, I will briefly analyze those situations in which peasants were directly confronted with propaganda about new forms of ownership. People became familiar with these new forms immediately following the early deployment of Soviet troops in Romania. Those who had left for the city to learn a trade attempted to spread information about new ownership forms upon returning to their home village; it was from them that their fellow villagers first encountered the new ideas. In my interviews, people characterized these first glimpses of propaganda as "interesting," but had paid them no attention. Here and there, public

meetings featured passionate speakers who delivered inflammatory exhortations about the "need to promote egalitarianism" and announced the advent of a "world in which wealth would be redistributed from the rich to the poor." Therefore, peasants' early encounters with the new system were shaped by the image that the local Communist Party members wanted to project.

It was only in the late 1940s that systematic efforts were made to influence public opinion in the village. The local leadership received instructions and official documents from the district cadres about how to do "persuasion work" in villages and what peasants were to be persuaded about. Thus, official instructions, orders and citations were publicly read in the village, displayed in public venues, read aloud during public meetings and sent to individual families. My respondents agreed that such activities had not been overwhelming and that although peasants participated in public meetings about new forms of ownership, these did not much sway public opinion. However, mailings of official documents directly to individual families had more of an impact.

Public readings of newspapers and propaganda materials represented the most widely used propaganda strategy for property transformation. The communist leadership recommended that teachers read such materials out loud every day, during work breaks. Team-organized labor, such as wheat threshing, represented the preferred venue for public reading. Posters were an even more aggressive strategy. Teachers and public servants working for the People's Council were assigned the task of producing propaganda materials. For instance, the painting of attention-grabbing slogans on public sites, such as fences, could take several hours and was carefully planned by the local communist leadership. This type of activity constituted an intrusion into village life, to which the street, the fences and other such public venues were central. Indeed, the very gesture of painting official messages on fences represented a change in peasants' private space. The subjects of the paintings also altered the surrounding environment. For instance, caricatures featuring *chiaburi* and peasants who did not want to join the GAC were widely displayed in public venues and around the town hall. They lampooned the basic values of village life and created a negative image for those who enjoyed a good reputation because of their wealth or work ethic.

Public information meetings, attended by large numbers of peasants and by local leaders, usually assisted by district representatives, offered an opportunity for the two sides to face each other. The meetings unfolded according to a thoroughly planned scenario. As a rule, the leaders delivered speeches and the peasants asked questions; no major conflicts were played out in public. Usually, meetings were called to solve concrete daily problems in the villages, in order to spur peasants' interest. Propaganda was most often sneaked in, rather than placed on the agenda as the main topic.

Whenever a leader overstepped his official role by making a subjective judgment, he created new opportunities for opposition—and thus for shaping public opinion. In the context of such events, leaders made remarks that villagers would later widely report. For instance, during one public meeting, villagers complained

about a low-ranking leader. The target of their attack listened for a while, then stood up and declared: "The more you scold me, the fatter I become."[3] As a result, peasants understood that debate was pointless; decisions had already been made. It became clear that the leadership despised the villagers and did not consider them equal discussion partners. In people's minds, this episode came to represent their relationship with their leaders, which was, in brief, that the leaders could dispense with their opinion. Statements like this had a strong impact on public opinion, and were frequently quoted when villagers talked about their inferior status. Interviewees referred to this event as a typical instance of humiliation and an example of their leaders' callous disregard for them.

General practice was for cadres to visit individual households, usually with a "persuasion team" of four or five people. As a rule, the team leader, who was in charge of choreographing the visit, was from outside the village. A local leader was also present, merely to assist the team leader and not to act independently of him. Low-ranking civil servants from the local administration and one or two teachers were also customarily a part of these persuasion teams. They knew where the village families lived, and in order to reduce peasants' anxiety and fear, they would usually enter through the gate first. They also initiated the conversation, but adopted a passive attitude thereafter and let the team leader run the show.

In Corund, such gatherings were nonetheless the exception rather than the rule: official meetings rarely took place in households. Instead, local officials would go around alone or in groups of two to three, engaging in persuasion work that often involved force and threats. More commonly, household heads were called to the People's Council, where two or three people were taken into a room at a time and subjected to intense persuasion, both as a group and individually. The goal of these meetings was not to sell the communist ideology but to make people sign up for the GAC. This type of "organizational work" was the exclusive province of activists who, with the sole exception of the highest-ranking local leader, were not natives of Corund. As a result, we know little about the specific strategies of persuasion they employed. In general, they used reprimand, humiliation, threats, and even physical abuse. Younger activists humiliated elder peasants by calling them by their first names—a wholly unacceptable practice in village etiquette—and cursed people regularly. Villagers who hesitated were placed with their faces against the wall and told to "look at the wall, think hard, and if you decide to join the GAC after all, then say so."[4] This was particularly humiliating, as other peasants could witness the whole show. In one such instance, an old man had his head hit against the table. Ashamed to go home in that condition, he stopped by an acquaintance to ask for a bandage to cover his face. According to a respondent who witnessed this moment, the man "was crying like a child." Stress and anxiety built up in the village during this period as people were summoned to the People's Council to sign up for GAC membership. Although a few tried to escape by hiding, people generally did their best to keep these appointments once summoned. If they missed an appointment,

activists would go to their house every day until they finally showed up at the People's Council.[5]

Respondents recalled that the persuasion teams lied to them. Those who were reluctant to enroll were told that their neighbors and acquaintances had already done so and that they should follow suit. Later the trick was revealed, as it turned out that their neighbors had been told the same thing about them. In some cases, the wife was asked to sign with the name of her husband, who was not present. The following interview excerpts illustrate what these persuasion meetings were about:

> B.I.: They called my father to the People's Council, it was right here, and he came out of the meeting with a sad face. He told me: "I have to sign up, or else they'll take me away…" They threatened him, because he was well-off, a *chiabur*, and they talked with him differently from the others…
> J.B.: Were you already married and did you own land?
> B.I.: Of course I owned land, five hectares, they summoned me and I had to join the GAC.
> J.B.: Was there any resistance in the village?
> B.I.: No, not here. When collectivization started here we had already heard about bad treatment in other villages, so everybody signed up right away. It's hard to say who forced whom… In the end, the activists showed up, summoned us, and everybody had to sign up for the GAC…[6]
> J.B.: Let's talk about how the GAC was created.
> B.A.: People were summoned to the People's Council, sometimes in groups, and hardly anyone came out of those meetings without having signed up for the GAC. This was in 1962, when collectivization was finished in other parts of Romania. But our leadership "generously" thought that our village shouldn't be left behind. It was the local leaders who wanted to collectivize… In neighboring villages, during collectivization the well-off peasants had been taken away in black cars, and people gossiped about it… so, I don't recall any resistance in our village. Sometimes people were summoned three times before they signed up for GAC membership, but in the end they had no choice…
> J.B.: Who was in the People's Council and who did the persuasion work?
> B.A.: There was always some high-ranking activist from Odorhei sent by the center, who gave orders to everyone around here… In the end, they persuaded everybody to sign up, by telling them that everybody else had signed up; people realized they had no choice but to sign up…
> J.B.: Were people forced to do so?
> B.A.: Not that I've heard about. People knew already how things had gone in neighboring villages, they were aware they had no choice. I heard about a man who lost his mind and ended up in a mad house… not because he was maltreated, but because his heart was broken…
> J.B.: How did this happen in your family?

> B.A.: Well, my father was summoned, like all the others; when our relatives signed up, one after another, he had to enroll as well. They took away the cow and the wagon, everything…[7]
> J.B.: How did your family join the GAC?
> K.M.: They called my father, because the land was in his name… They called him three times. He didn't want to sign up, he was very dejected… The first time he alleged that he hadn't consulted me, his son, and therefore couldn't sign up. The second time, his excuse was that I was away and he couldn't discuss this issue with me. I was in hiding so he could have a good excuse… Then they told us that we didn't have to sign over all our land and that we could keep some of it if we didn't tell anyone. They told my father to transfer some of the land into my name so I could sign up and then they would give us back a parcel of land… They were telling my father all these things to strengthen his resolution to join the GAC… My father did as he was told, we both signed up, but left out two parcels of land. Now we see what a bad idea that was, because the two parcels weren't registered anywhere and now we can't get our ownership certificates for this land.[8]

Several respondents had a similar situation, having not signed up all their land and therefore being unable to claim property rights for it after 1989:

> J.B.: How much land did you sign up?
> K.M.: Four and a half hectares… I had no choice… I waited to see what others were doing, they signed up one by one, there was no other way out… They [the cadres] told us they would give us back a parcel of land after we signed up… This is what actually happened…[9]

Analysis of official meetings suggests that except for one occasion where a person was forced to sign up for GAC membership, most of them were a mere formality. Although villagers did not like these meetings, whose aim was to break down village social structure, attendance was mandatory, and they found ways to cope with them. By organizing meetings with peasants, the local leadership did its best to enforce the orders received from the district authorities. In turn, the community also did its best to cope with the situation and find their way around these top-down ideological constraints. In an eloquent example, the well-respected local schoolteacher was assigned the task of drawing a caricature of a person who had been labeled a *chiabur*. Before doing it, however, he went to a member of the *chiabur*'s family and apologized, saying he had no choice but to draw as he was told. The example shows community members striving to resolve the situation imposed on them by the ideology and the propaganda meetings. At the time (prior to 1961), the stakes of persuading people were not very high, as collectivization had barely started in Corund that year. In the short time available, it was not possible to do serious propaganda. The example shows, then, the principal role played by convincing—indeed, forcing—people to join.

The plethora of official meetings is evidence that people in Corund had a hard time accepting collective ownership, and their opposition to it formed the core of relations between peasants and the local leadership. Collectivization happened so fast that the two sides had no chance to develop alternative attitudes concerning its desirability. Regardless of whether the abuse directed against the villagers was psychological or physical, any strategy used to persuade them to sign up for GAC membership had negative associations. From the very beginning until collectivization was complete, the local population was opposed to the new form of property, and—as we have seen in this section—their minds were not changed by the uninformative official meetings, as relatively little seemed to happen during them. In what follows, I turn from the "surface" to the "subterranean" interactions between the local community and the local leadership, to see what can be learned there.

2. "HIDDEN" RELATIONSHIPS

In the absence of written records, it is difficult to reconstitute, decades later, informal or the "behind the scenes" social interactions between the agents of collectivization and the local community. Drawing upon interview data, I can at best take a first cut into describing these interactions. In the context of this study, I will refer to interactions that were substantively different from those that occurring in public meetings as "hidden relations." Without written records, the best way to illuminate some of these village-specific "informal" interactions is through case studies, where we can see how they were shaped by local structures and the attitudes of the local leadership. This means that they differed from place to place, though documentary sources give us almost no insight into such variation.

Crucial in shaping the relationship between the local community and the local power holders was the fact that the latter managed to co-opt a small group of villagers to help them with persuasion work. This group consisted of barely a dozen villagers who volunteered to help local leaders with the "implementation" of central directives, initiating discussions in Corund about the necessary transition to a new form of property and the importance of having a GAC. They were secondary players acting as intermediaries between the local community and the leadership. Their intermediary role made them inferior in rank to the leaders, but superior to most peasants. This immediately created problems, as they occupied an inferior status in the village hierarchy, and in the eyes of other villagers, had lacked "weight." People saw them as good-for-nothing second-raters, who had risen to power from "the dregs" of the village. Working alongside the leadership, they achieved a new position not because of their own merit, but through the support of outside authorities.

This situation was intended to seem at least somewhat legitimate to villagers. But the emergence of this group complicated the relationship between villagers and the leadership in two respects. On one hand, they often met with the villagers,

representing the leadership. This created confusion for the locals, because at the formal level these meetings contained a marked asymmetry: the villagers held a lower position than the representatives of power. On the other hand, at the level of informal interactions, the asymmetry was reversed: villagers were fully aware that they themselves were "somebodies," whereas the group members were "nobodies." When villagers were called to the town hall, the situation was humiliating for precisely this reason. They believed the new leadership was purposely humiliating them by sending these nobodies to their houses. The respondents I interviewed expressed outrage even now at having been forced to muffle their views when they received visits from the "local organizers," were ordered around by them or were openly threatened, without being able to argue back. It was not force or the imposition of authority that was perceived as humiliating, but the distorted logic of promoting unworthy individuals into positions of power in society. According to the traditional norms of village life, the position of "local agitators" was illegitimate and irrational; their "place was on the fringes of the village, where they should have remained."[10] Nonetheless, people had to put up with the dominant posturing of these "local agitators," who would make daily visits to families, put on airs and issue orders on behalf of the local leadership. Having to put up with this role reversal every day profoundly marked the relationship between villagers and their leaders.

The second factor that left an indelible mark on this relationship was the fact that villagers could not argue back. They could not openly express their opinion about the illegitimacy of these "ne'er-do-wells." One respondent recalled that the villagers "would have gladly ousted them, but it was impossible to do so. Sometimes those who behaved badly were denounced out of revenge, but the denouncers soon found themselves on lists of *chiaburi*."[11] Therefore, along with having to put up with these people, this constant silencing of their own opinions was another source of humiliation. We can say, of course, that at least this humiliation was better than physical force or the direct imposition of power, and was therefore less damaging. Nonetheless, putting up with these illegitimate and irrational situations without a murmur challenged the very basic rules and values of the local community.

Interviewees who remember those days preferred to narrate the humiliations inflicted on them by the local agitators, rather than the abuses of the leadership itself. This finding suggests that the symbolic attacks on the community's rules and value system were at least as consequential as the aggressive exercise of power. In a way, they were even more destructive than physical aggression. In the world of the village, state violence could be explained as a normal part of the exercise of power. Compared with that, this symbolic form of aggression was irrational and hard for the villager's to explain. Therefore, villagers had a harder time coping with and accepting it than they did with the outright imposition of power.

We can explain this by the importance of the model of the autarchic family, by concepts of local identity, by the villagers' knowledge and community practices. In Corund, there had never existed power structures (e.g., large estates, land-

lords) that challenged the autonomy of daily village life. In fact, collectivization was the first top-down process that forcibly changed the way of life and property structures in Corund. Thus, we should not be surprised by the powerful effect of the symbolic verbal humiliations that called village traditions and values into question. The progressive degradation of local practices and relations was an informal and "concealed" process, lying outside the formal work of organizing, and undocumented in the official exercise of power. The emergence of "local agitators" and their systematic activity as intermediaries between the leadership and the villagers therefore gave rise to certain processes that went beyond the mere organizing of collectivization. The effects of these processes are still visible in the present day.

In the relationship between villagers and their leaders, I identified other procedures that challenged local social structures and the local value system. This was the overt intention of various measures, notably the anti-*chiabur* discourse. But I believe the effects of the unofficial interactions I have been describing were more powerful. The creation and maintenance of a new hierarchy of positions facilitated the attack on local structures and values in a number of ways. Occasional encounters with the appointed local leadership had a similar effect. In particular, interactions with the chairman of the People's Council are still distinctly remembered four decades later. According to villagers, the chairman walked alone in the street, talked to whomever he met, and paid unexpected visits to whoever was at home. His past as a police officer and his skills in controlling, interrogating, and bossing people around may account for his behavior. His entire attitude and the way he spoke to people revealed that "he was holding people accountable." Speaking to them in a commanding tone, he treated them as inferiors. Often he would stand at the open gate and shout to people inside. His gestures and tone betrayed his feelings of superiority, irony, and disdain. It wasn't that he was angry or gave people orders; he merely bore an air of superiority and consistently talked down to people. This behavior was especially offensive and humiliating to villagers who were his elders and who, according to local norms, should have been treated with respect.

What he told peasants was no less humiliating and degrading. He would lecture them that they didn't understand the world, didn't want to hear "the voice of new times to come," and didn't realize that opposition to the GAC was futile and detrimental to their interests. Respondents remembered his words clearly and often quoted him in private:

> So, uncle Marton, do you still refuse to join the GAC? You should know that a new world is coming into being, and it's not the world you want. In the new world even your cow, your wagon and your land will be taken away from you and if you still don't get it, I'll make sure they take you away too.[12]

The old man's wife overheard the chairman speaking thus with her husband at the gate, and later on conveyed its points to her acquaintances, but the old man felt so humiliated that he never mentioned this episode again. Such experiences had a much stronger impact on village public opinion than did organized meetings and official propaganda. Villagers interpreted the chairman's words as carrying the following message: "We're here at the leaders' beck and call, they do whatever they want with us and we can't do anything to defend ourselves, we just have to put up with it." The effect was once again to threaten their way of life.

It is important to note that villagers adopted two different sets of social roles and behaviors in their relationship with their leaders. The first set of behaviors was based on language, roles, and actions consistent with the local social structure and values; the second on language, roles, and actions they used when they encountered their leaders or other officials. In general, human beings have a natural ability to regulate their conduct according to the situation, and studies of the pre-collectivization period have documented the existence of diverse models of behavior.[13] I mean something well beyond that, however. What was distinctive about collectivization is that it led to a split of social roles into two poles that were not only unconnected, but were in fact opposed. Underpinning these two sets of social roles and behaviors were opposing value judgments. In situations in which people felt at ease, they performed behaviors they referred to as "authentic" and appropriate for their way of life. In interactions with officials, they "acted out" what they referred to as "inauthentic," simulated roles. Many respondents mentioned that in such circumstances they used to "talk official language," often to "say things they did not agree with," or even to "lie, when there was no other way out the situation."[14] Fragments from interviews illustrate that people were fully aware of the existence of two different sets of roles and behaviors, one of which they considered negative.

In conclusion, two kinds of communication situations emerged. One was characterized as "good," "ours," "appropriate" and "comfortable for us." The other was characterized as "bad," "necessary" and "alien to us." Villagers were not yet used to inhabiting two opposed sets of roles and situations. They did not feel at ease in the roles expected of them in official settings, and did not find it easy to shift back and forth.[15] All my respondents affirmed that in this period, behaviors and values that suited the collective farm became wholly distinct from those governing "private" life. This phenomenon is worth examining closely. We find evidence of the two different behavior sets only in interviews, not in documents. Because most of the interactions that shaped social relations were informal, we can expect the "hidden" world of these relations to hide still more important processes that studying informal interactions will bring to light.

Moreover, if the course of collectivization was determined by the attitude of the locals, we should expect that course to vary from village to village. In Corund, for instance, villagers shared a negative view of collectivization. With the exception of local agitators, all villagers considered collectivization disastrous. Although they

could not voice their opinions publicly, they remained viscerally opposed to it until the end, and this shared reaction had a number of consequences. Those few locals who embraced the idea of collectivization became "local agitators" and were assimilated into the "enemy," that is, into the official leadership. This attitude persisted through the entire period of the collective farm's operation, leaving a mark on the decollectivization process that lasted as late as 1989, as well as on collective memory concerning this process. Had the villagers been more evenly divided, with more of them supporting the collective, the result would have been very different.

Equally worthy of scholarly attention is the fact that even before the GAC was set up, a sharp cleavage had developed between "us," the locals, and "them," the leadership. An outcome of the symbolic language that defines the discourse on collectivization to this day, this split facilitated the alignment of those peasants who supported collectivization with the local leadership. Once regular members of the community, these people became negative role models, were "othered," and therefore ousted from the community. They became "agitators," "worthless people" or "the weak clique," siding with the authorities against the local community. The local leadership was not spared this symbolic degradation, and it remains a hidden element of communicative relations between locals and their leaders. People kept a detailed record of the weaknesses and failures of the "higher-ups," kept track of their involuntary gestures, and used this information to symbolically degrade their leaders and keep them at a distance. All this occurred, of course, amongst private circles of friends and relatives, since the public expression of these attitudes was dangerous.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can argue that the "hidden universe" of the relationships between the local community and the new local leadership was richer than its parallel relationships with higher officials. But to identify and study these hidden relations is a daunting task. My examples suggest several important processes in this respect. Some of these processes worked against local values and traditional social relations. Others (such as the formation of two types of behavior) had a long-lasting effect on village life. Fully examining the implications of collectivization requires many other such case studies of "hidden" interactions, which vary widely from village to village.

The material I have presented shows how people tried to "survive" collectivization, which they see as a calamitous period of deep crisis. Although a considerable amount of their property became collective property, people did not assimilate the new ownership structures. They sought to keep their distance from the GAC by means of several strategies. A particularly successful one was to direct symbolic language against the leaders and "local agitators," by which means they further devalued the GAC and expressed their contempt for it. This helped to preserve numerous elements of the pre-collectivization way of life and enabled

the parallel persistence of two different systems of roles and behaviors. People adjusted their discourse and behaviors to fit the roles and values of one system or the other. Although we cannot accurately assess the damage, even in one community, it is obvious that people lost a great deal during collectivization. In addition to the loss of traditional social structures, the onslaught on people's system of values was a major loss. In my opinion, thus far, existing research has not adequately explored these aspects.

Another key question is whether one can consider the adaptation villagers acquired during this difficult period as a gain. Undeniably, for instance, the ability to switch between two sets of roles proved useful under the 1980s dictatorship.[16] In a similar vein, one can ask to what extent the affirming of people's rights (the restitution of land and of a system of values) actually hindered the contemporary transition to a market economy. These questions open avenues for further study, as research on daily life and social interactions during collectivization is still in its infancy. Future research will undoubtedly find these questions challenging and worthwhile.

Translated from Romanian by Cornel Ban and Katherine Verdery

NOTES

1 "For the socialist transformation of agriculture, the Executive Committee will help the Initiative Committee in order to increase membership and set up the GAC in the commune. In order for the Executive Committee and the Party Committee to help him, the chairman of the Initiative Committee has to write an official report outlining accomplishments every two weeks." DJAN Harghita, fond 395, "Sfatul popular al comunei Corund," file 1954/19, 95–96 (original text in Hungarian).

2 "By accomplishing the tasks outlined by the Party, the working class in agriculture embarked on the path to industrialized agriculture and GACs nationwide. Thus, as comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej announced, in the past weeks collectivization was completed all over the country. We are witnesses to these events, as in our commune we inaugurated the 'Union' GAC, which represents the outcome of persistent efforts by the local Party Committee, the Executive Committee of the People's Council, and the working class in Corund […] This winter, the Executive Committee of the People's Council carried out an extensive information campaign focusing on agricultural as well as political issues. […] We organized public meetings, the agitators instructed the working class, there present, on the farming season plan for the spring and the collectivization of agriculture. During our political training schedule, we emphasized the tasks outlined by the Third Party Congress regarding collectivization. The Executive Committee of the People's Council, guided by the local Party Committee, created the Committees for Initiative and for Management in order to assist with the daily planning of the GAC. The GAC leadership employed more than 150 agitators who went to every family and talked to people, so that people would willingly sign up for GAC membership. We are particularly happy to inform you that our efforts bore fruit, as the working class transformed the establishment of the GAC into a mass activity that was completed in only two weeks. Thus, based on the decision of the Executive Committee of the People's

Council, the GAC was set up in Corund on March 25, 1962." DJAN Harghita, fond 395, "Sfatul popular al comunei Corund", file 1962/3, 2–5 (original text in Hungarian), my translation.

3 B.Á., August 19, 2001.
4 B.I., 84 years old, male, tailor, middle- to high-income farmer, August 24, 2001.
5 Gy.P., 85 years old, male, farmer, *kulak*, July 30, 2001.
6 B.I., August 24, 2001.
7 B.Á., August 19, 2001.
8 K.M., 72 years old, male, retired, farmer. Corund, July 23, 2001.
9 K.M., July 23, 2001.
10 K.M., July 23, 2001.
11 B.I., August 24, 2001.
12 B.Á., August 19, 2001.
13 For instance, Sándor Oláh did research in Valea Homoroadelor, as part of the research agenda of the Center for Regional and Anthropological Research, Miercurea-Ciuc.
14 O.S., 85 years old, man, mechanic and farmer, *kulak*, July 9, 2001.
15 According to research carried out by the Center for Regional and Anthropological Research, the shift from one set of roles to the other had become routine during the 1970s and 1980s. See Julianna Bodó, "Átjárási technikák a szocializmusban a társadalom privát és hivatalos szférája között," in Julianna Bodó, ed., *Fényes tegnapunk. Tanulmányok a szocializmus korszakáról* (Miercurea-Ciuc: Pro-Print, 1998), 31.
16 For a study of duplicity and survival strategies during communism, see Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

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"Never Leave 'til Tomorrow What You Can Do Today!"* A Case Study of a Model Collective Farm: "New Life" Sântana (Arad Region)

CĂLIN GOINA

> They put their money where their mouths were because the collective started to pay well from the beginning. Hey, when a peasant came home with thirty sacks of wheat, and some barley, and whatever else… So people started [saying] "Man, wait a minute, the collective is actually a good thing, I'm joining. I'm not a servant to the rich anymore, I'm not a servant to the German, I work eight to five. Look how much wheat I got, look how much barley, man!" The poor, they were sort of helpless because they didn't have any equipment, they didn't have horses, so they were won over more quickly. Those who were better off, they held out longer.
>
> O.M., male, 80 years old, farmer, Comlăuş, July 1995, August 2002.

This case study examines the collectivization process in the village of Sântana, located in the Arad Plain of western Romania. Sântana presents an interesting if atypical study because the first collective farm there, designated a "model collective farm," was a success both in the short and long term, and was praised by Party propagandists and villagers alike, whereas the second farm was not. The GAC "Viața Nouă" (New Life) Sântana was created in 1950. By the end of 1952, three years into the collectivization campaign in Romania, more than two thirds of the village's farmland had been collectivized and over half its families had joined the local collective farm. The "New Life" collective continued to demonstrate its economic viability over time. As further evidence of its beneficial impact on village life, after 1990, the collective's former members created the "Sântana Romanian–German Agricultural Association," which took over the collective's entire inventory and more than 90% of its land. To this day, villagers speak positively about the radical changes that the "socialist transformation of agriculture" produced in Sântana.

By contrast, the GAC "Al doilea congres al PMR" (The Second Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party), the second collective formed in the Comlăuş neighborhood of Sântana in 1956, did not enjoy the success of the GAC "New Life".

* This slogan was painted on a red background over the entry gate of the "New Life" GAC in Sântana.

Lacking local support from its inception, it lagged well behind in attracting members, as well as in organization and production. Peasant resistance was such that collectivization in Comlăuş was not completed until 1960.

This paper examines the conditions that shaped these different outcomes in the GAC Sântana and the GAC Comlăuş, and sheds light on the complexity of the collectivization process. Moreover, it underscores a key feature of the socialist transformation of agriculture, namely its modernizing effects, which, in today's excavation of the period's excesses, are too often forgotten or glossed over. In addition to modernizing the practices of agricultural production (e.g., farming large contiguous plots of land and introducing mechanization),[1] where successful, collectivization contributed to an increase in villagers' living standards in terms of relative economic income, educational opportunities, leisure, and welfare benefits. It also brought about a reconfiguration of village social hierarchies, placing a new emphasis on education and the accumulation of consumer goods rather than on hard work, frugality, and the accumulation of land.

In what follows, I examine the manner in which collectivization unfolded in Sântana. This process represented the last stage of the state's sweeping and unprecedented intervention into village life, the traditional rhythms of which had been dramatically altered through massive re-allocations of property, population transfers, and the dramatic transformation of villagers' economic and social status. These changes were enabled, in part, by the selective application of laws; "targeted" taxation; and the violation of property and personal rights, including forced entry into households, abusive arrests and physical violence. I argue that the local vulnerabilities generated by the regime's economic pressures compelled the people of Sântana to enter the collective "New Life" at a high rate. The collective farm, in turn, was able to provide its members with a decent annual income as well as services, credit opportunities and goods that were inaccessible to nonmembers. At the same time, the mechanized farming of large areas greatly reduced the amount of time and manual effort its members had to expend.

This study attributes the positive trajectory of "New Life" Sântana to the following three interrelated factors:

1. Ecological factors: located on a plain, the village had large areas of high-quality farmland, making it ideal for large-scale modern agricultural based on mechanization and chemical technologies. Introducing these through collectivization produced a significant increase in agricultural production and yield, as well as in the revenues of its members.
2. Local political, economic, and social factors: the state expropriated the property of Sântana's Germans and colonized the village with Romanian war veterans, creating a context favorable for collective farming. On the one hand, the new Romanian settlers had neither the means nor the skills to work the land they acquired; on the other, the local Germans, dispossessed of their property but not of their skills, had few alternatives to working in the collective.

3. Organizational and material factors: the rich stock of farming resources (e.g., equipment, animals, land) confiscated from Sântana's Germans, combined with its ideological status as a "model *kolkhoz*" and the GAC's good management, ensured both the collective's economic success and its president's political rise. The collective's privileged access to, yet limited dependency on, the bureaucratic-economic structures of the Party-State gave it relative autonomy, setting it apart from most other collective farms.

To examine the collectivization period, I conducted primarily archival and ethnographic research. I analyzed archival materials, in particular the collective farm's "Annual Reports," which are housed in Sântana and in the Regional Branch of the Romanian National Archive in a nearby town. I also spent the summers of 2001, 2002 and 2003 in Sântana, conducting ethnographic research among those who remember the collectivization period. Ethnographers immerse themselves in the daily rhythms of their subjects' lives to gain an understanding of the conceptual categories the latter use to make sense of and act in the world around them. Over the course of my research, I interviewed 19 women and 21 men between the ages of fifty and ninety. The interviewees represented different ethnicities and social strata, and consequently had different experiences during collectivization. My fieldwork was both enhanced and hindered by my being a "native" ethnographer; that is, I grew up in Sântana.[2] Furthermore, my paternal grandfather was the founder of the GAC "New Life" and then its president. My maternal grandfather, by contrast, was among those who refused to join the collective until 1960, when he gave in to the threat that his daughter would not be permitted to continue her education.

In what follows, I first outline the context in which collectivization began in Sântana, and then discuss the above-mentioned factors that compelled peasants to join the GAC New Life, but resist joining the GAC Comlăuş. I focus on the economic pressures exerted by the Party-State and the dynamic relationship over time between positive incentives and negative constraints. In addition, I highlight the modernizing impact of the process on daily life.

1. THE VILLAGE OF SÂNTANA

Sântana is located in the Western Plain of Romania, 28 km north of the county capital, Arad, and 20 km east of the Hungarian border.[3] Historically, Sântana consisted of two settlements: Sântana and Comlăuş (Komlos in Hungarian).[4] Sântana was inhabited almost exclusively by ethnic Germans (*Schwaben)*, while Comlăuş had roughly an equal number of Romanians and Germans and a sizable Roma community that lived in a geographically-segregated community on its outskirts. Between 1926 and 1950, Sântana was the administrative center of a cluster of nine villages, but in 1950, Sântana became a commune, a local governmental unit made

up of the adjacent villages of Sântana and Comlăuş, as well as the neighboring settlement of Caporal Alexa (formerly Cherechi), six km to the east. Until 1968, Sântana was part of the district Criş in the region of Crişana. Since then, it has been part of Arad County.

The first written record of Comlăuş dates back to 1334, when it lay within the borders of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom.[5] In the 1740s, Baron Bibics, the local feudal lord, brought 54 German families from the Speyer region of Bavaria, Westphalia, Thuringia and Schwarzwald (now in Germany),[6] and settled them in the southeastern part of Comlăuş. There they established a German village named Sanktanna. The village prospered and was subsequently elevated to the status of market town on July 26, 1742, by a decree of Empress Maria Theresa.[7] At the end of World War I, both Sanktanna and Comlăuş became part of Greater Romania.

Sântana remains a multi-ethnic community whose composition prior to the events discussed in this article was as follows:

TABLE 1. *Population of Sântana by ethnic group, according to the 1930 census:*

	Romanians	*Germans*	*Hungarians*[8]	*Jews*	*Gypsies*	*Total*
Sântana	260 (4.6%)	*4,925 (88%)*	373 (7%)	24 (0.4%)	0	5,582
Comlăuş	*2,600 (50%)*	1,826 (35%)	112 (2%)	3	656 (13%)	5,197
Caporal Alexa	*1,729 (96%)*	20 (1%)	39 (2%)	0	0	1,788

Source: Chelcea and Lăţea 2000: 56.

Among them, Germans tended to be better off economically than everyone else, while the highly stigmatized Roma were the poorest of all. The richest German family in Sântana owned 600 ha, whereas the most well-to-do Romanians had between 20 and 30 ha. The Germans were more likely than the Romanians to use tractors and advanced agricultural equipment. They also had a higher literacy rate than the Romanians. (Roma were overwhelmingly illiterate.) The Germans and Roma spoke Romanian as well, the language of the marketplace, but Romanians did not generally speak German or Romani, the native language of Roma. Although Sântana was ethnically diverse, inter-ethnic conflict was not characteristic; nor was intermarriage, which was virtually nonexistent before 1945.

The majority of villagers lived off the land, growing various cereals, beets, and vegetables. In addition to agriculture, some four percent of Sântana's inhabitants were craftsmen, merchants or local intellectuals[9] Roma men practiced traditional crafts such as adobe building, and women served as domestic workers for the more affluent Romanians and Germans.

2. SÂNTANA IN THE 1940s

An important feature of the period immediately after WWII was the unprecedented level of state intervention into village life. Before turning to this, I briefly review aspects of village social organization to set the stage for assessing the effects of state intrusion. Daily life and agricultural labor was not easy in the 1940s. People had poor diets. Romanian middle peasants only ate meat twice a week, and even then, a chicken had to suffice for an entire family.[10] The land was largely worked with horses, and at harvest time, men scythed for days under the burning sun, while women and children gathered the cut wheat (or other crop) and bound it. The ideal of most peasants was to own and manage a self-sustaining, autonomous farm—an ideal realizable through hard work and frugality.[11] These values also positioned villagers in the local social hierarchy, the major cleavages of which ran along ethnic lines and/or those of social status (both of which were often conflated with class distinctions). As Lampland underscored, in peasant communities, work "…structured local hierarchies of privilege and morality,"[12] as it did in Sântana. The Germans, who were respected for being hardworking and frugal (see below), were at the top of the hierarchy. Being the richest, they were seen as eager to accumulate more land through effort and sacrifice. Without exception, in the interviews I conducted, Germans were held in high regard due to their relationship with their land.[13]

> There hasn't been a nation more attached to the land than the Germans! Man, these people would've gone without food or sleep just so they could work another 50 *ares* […] Man, what's theirs, the Germans', is theirs: good managers, hardworking people, they knew how to appreciate the land! They appreciated it as they did their own life! Land, to the Germans, was their soul—their heart, that's what land was for them, and that's that![14]

Gypsies, by contrast, were thought to be almost subhuman due to their alleged laziness and refusal to work the land. Being the poorest, they occupied the opposite end of the spectrum. Status was similarly associated with hard work and austerity, irrespective of ethnicity. Being wealthy or rich (*gazde*) was thought to be the reward for industriousness and frugality, with upward social mobility possible for all who applied themselves. At the same time, high status implicitly legitimated the unequal distribution of resources between villagers. Economic inequality was stratified among poor, middle and rich peasants. In Comlăuş, for example, poor peasants owned less than four or five ha of land; there, very few were actually landless. Middle peasants had between five and 15 ha, meeting the local threshold for having an autonomous household. Six or seven families were considered *gazde*, and owned between 20 and 30 ha of land. Nevertheless, their lifestyle was not very different from the other peasants. They continued to work their land, although they hired additional workers to help them with planting and harvesting, often appealing to ritual kin networks.

The situation was different in the German community. The average German household possessed more land than a Romanian one, and the economic disparities between rich and poor peasants were sharper. Unlike the rich Romanian peasants mentioned above, the wealthiest Germans did not work their land, hiring workers instead. Their privileged status was visible in the village: although the houses of average German peasants were only somewhat larger than those of Romanian peasants living in Comlăuş, and the houses of rich Romanian peasants there were not much larger than most, that cannot be said of the rich Germans, whose large houses dominated the local architecture and landscape then as they do today.[15]

But all of this began to change dramatically on January 17, 1945 when the Romanian army entered Sântana. Together with the Soviets, they deported most of Sântana's adult German population—all males between the ages of 17 and 45 and all females between 18 and 35—to labor camps in the Urals and Ukraine. In total, 2,500 German civilians were deported, of whom 275 never returned.[16] After the deportation, Sântana remained populated only by children and the elderly. Several months later, the state confiscated the property—land, houses, and agricultural equipment—that belonged to German citizens and Romania's ethnic Germans, with the exception of those who had fought as soldiers in the Romanian Army during the war.[17] The Germans who remained in Sântana, and those who returned from the Soviet Union over the course of the next seven years, were allowed to live in their homes, but only as renters of what had become state property. With their property expropriated, they had few means of survival other than to work in the collective or seek employment elsewhere. The village social hierarchy was thus leveled.

Another aspect of the state's intervention in village life was political repression and violence, which was widely practiced across Romania in similar forms. Well-respected community leaders and former mayors from Comlăuş, for example, were arrested and sent to prison for no other reason than having formerly been involved in local politics. Members of the former historical political parties (e.g., the National Liberal Party and the National Peasant Party) were particularly targeted. Political violence, both symbolic and physical, continued throughout the collectivization process, if in different forms (see section 3 below).

Arguably the most important element of the Party-State's active involvement in Sântana's daily life was ethnic Romanians' colonization of this almost depopulated village (following the deportation of the Germans discussed above) and its subsequent "Romanianization."[18] With the introduction of the agrarian reform in 1945, the land expropriated from the Germans was initially redistributed to 400 former Romanian veterans, who received five ha per family.[19] They arrived in Sântana between 1946 and 1948, coming from neighboring counties with poor quality land and high birth and infant mortality rates. In the 1950s, Romanians from mountainous villages also resettled in Sântana to join the prospering collective farm. By 1956, Sântana's demographics had changed: with the colonized Ro-

manians and the return of the deported Germans, Sântana's population (not including Comăluş) numbered 6,358 inhabitants, comprised of 1,750 German, 568 Romanian, 103 Hungarian and five Slovak families. (See Table I for comparison.)

According to the communist regime's taxation categories, the inhabitants of Sântana were re-"class"-ified as follows: 1,533 families of poor peasants, 601 families of middle peasants and 295 families of "chiaburi" (rich peasants or exploiters). In Sântana (but not Comlăuş), this last category was applied exclusively to Germans who, although their property had been expropriated, owned more than 20 ha of land, or a mill, a tractor or other means of production before 1946. The colonized Romanians and the few Germans who had fought in the Romanian Army made up the category of middle peasants. The poor, with few exceptions, were the Germans who had been expropriated.[20]

The newly arrived Romanians were "hosted" in the German's former houses: according to a state decree, each German household had to accommodate a colonist family, giving them the best room and half of the vegetable garden. The colonized Romanians were duly impressed by the Germans' former living standards:

> Oy, oy, their houses looked great in comparison to those where I came from… It was a big difference, you bet! The German house was bigger, *way* bigger. In my village [...] the boys slept in the stable because there wasn't enough room in the house for everyone.[21]

In the early days of cohabitation, some colonists took advantage of or abused the Germans: "Back then, they used to steal, some of the colonists, they'd steal from the Germans," remembered a Romanian woman.[22] A German woman recalled:

> We were four children and our father and our mother and [the family assigned to live in our house] kicked us out of the house and made us move to a little summer kitchen outside. They didn't have a thing […] they had these [disparagingly] corn cobs and they kept them in the house, they drew in mice and whatnot. And when it was filthy, they kept saying […] "Come now [old man] Seppi, we don't need that many rooms, how about we move into the kitchen and you move back in here." Okay, we believed them and we painted the house, and we cleaned it, and they stayed in the kitchen for a month or two, and then they kicked us out again [and moved back into a clean house].[23]

Forced cohabitation inevitably generated conflicts between the colonists and the Germans. From time to time, groups of men from each "camp" would get into fights. But gradually these tensions abated, especially after 1955–1956, when after a ten-year delay, the regime allocated parcels of land to the settlers on which they built their own houses. Neither the Germans nor the Romanians were allowed to

own the houses in which they lived, making them all the more vulnerable to the demands of the Party-State.[24]

The situation in Comlăuş and Caporal Alexa was entirely different. Comlăuş was inhabited by Romanians, Germans and Roma; Caporal Alexa was only inhabited by Romanians. As a result of the 1945 agrarian reform, local veterans and peasants were allocated land in both, but due to its scarcity, they received plots of at most three hectares and quite often less. The situation of the Gypsies is harder to determine. Almost all Roma men had served in the army, having lacked the means to bribe recruiters to avoid drafting them. Hence, as veterans, they were allocated plots of land. However, few of them had either the skills, experience or the means to work their own land, although some did try.[25]

All of these changes gave rise to a context ridden with ambiguities: on the one hand, threats, violence, and the selective application of the law contributed to a general atmosphere of fear and uncertainty; on the other, the redistribution of land and farm equipment to poor peasants and veterans opened up new opportunities for social mobility. It is against this background that the process of collectivizing agriculture began.

3. THE COLLECTIVIZATION PROCESS

3.1. The founding of the "New Life" collective farm

Overtaxation of landowners was a crucial instrument wielded by the Party-State in its quest to promote collectivization. During the postwar years, it introduced a three-tiered system of dues and requisitions (*cote*, see the Glossary of Terms) in order to pay war damages to the Soviet Union.[26] In keeping with the stratified class categories designed to create class warfare and remold social hierarchies, poor peasants were to pay less than middle peasants while *chiaburi* were taxed exorbitantly. As mentioned previously, collecting these dues was often accompanied by public humiliation, forced entry into households, physical violence, and even murder. As one person recalled:

> Back then, workers from around the country were appointed as mayors, deputy mayors, party secretaries. Some had only 4th or 5th grade educations, whatever it was, it didn't matter. One who came here was a co-worker of my father's at the Railcar Plant in Arad, Csany was his name […] One of Haicu's sons, they were among the richest families around here, they took him to the town hall for failing to pay the quotas and beat him to a pulp.[27]

The Party-State's strategy of over-taxation destroyed the economic base of Comlăuş's *chiaburi*, who were pauperized over the course of the next few years. Recall that Sântana's Germans had already been expropriated and deported. (Even so, villagers continued to accord status respect and moral authority to the

formerly rich peasants and Germans.) With so many villagers reduced to impoverished states and lacking employment, the conditions were ripe for collectivization.

Collectivization in Sântana was imposed as a consequence of decisions taken at the state level, and was foreshadowed in the speech Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej presented at the plenary meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party on March 3–5, 1949:

> For now, we should limit ourselves to organizing only a small number of collective farms, in those places where poor and middle peasants are determined to switch to this mode of agricultural production and where the best technical conditions already exist. These first agricultural cooperatives will serve as models, as examples for the others.[28]

Sântana was ideal from this perspective. The colonized Romanians were mostly poor young people who had no roots in the village, cut off from the conservative influence of their extended families. They also lacked adequate means to work the land. Many of them sympathized with the new regime, seeing it as the ally of the peasant for having given them land:[29]

> Well, yeah! We came as *revolutionaries* to force the Germans out of their houses! […] That's how the agrarian reform was carried out because the state relied on the peasant: "They need land? Let them fight for it!" […] And then you can imagine what they did after they gave us the land—*because it was the communists who gave it to us* [my emphasis]—then they turned on us.[30]

Moreover, after expropriation of the Germans' property, Sântana had "the best technical conditions," including 71 tractors organized into a state-owned Center for Renting Agricultural Equipment,[31] as well as large areas of prime quality farmland. In 1950, as collectivization got under way, 99 percent of Sântana's 3,723 ha was classified in the two highest soil-fertility groups. Favorable geographic and climatic conditions made Sântana an ideal location for the large-scale production of grains such as wheat and barley, sunflowers, beets and vegetables.[32]

The relationship between the new regime and Sântana's influential figures was another factor in choosing Sântana for the creation of a model collective. Colonization had generated multiple problems associated with the relocation of hundreds of families and the redistribution of land to them. Several young peasants among the new arrivals coordinated the allocation of resources, thereby distinguishing themselves. They subsequently became the link between the new regime and the colonized community. For example, Gheorghe Goina was an informal leader of the families that came from Avram Iancu. He was a relatively educated peasant trained as a priest's assistant. He became mayor of Sântana in

1948 and joined the ranks of the Communist Party in the same year. He was appointed head of the *plasa* (administrative unit, see the Glossary of Terms) Sântana, and founded the collective farm "New Life" in February 1950.[33] According to a colonized peasant who resisted joining the collective until 1962:

> In '49 he [Gheorghe Goina] went to Russia to see the GACs and *sovkhozes* there. Well, when he came back, he came with the plan to make a collective. But he didn't force it on people, he spoke pretty well, I can picture him even now, I'll remember this as long as I live, he said: "I'm not forcing anyone. Whoever wants to. Only willingly." Well, some were willing, some weren't. There was a gang of troublemakers, do-nothings, they were always at the pub. Those were his people, they joined right away; and they disappeared a couple of years later because they didn't like working in the collective or on their own.[34]

This excerpt describes, *in nuce,* the initiation of the collectivization process. The communist authorities first chose the village, and then selected the (already influential) individual who was expected to manage the process. Goina was sent to the Soviet Union for an "exchange of experience," so he would be able to carry out persuasion work among skeptical peasants upon his return. On October 10, 1949 Goina founded the "Peasants' Voluntary Association of Sântana," a less controlled form of association ("*întovărăşire*"). Unlike members in a *kolkhoz*, members of an association did not lose the legal title to their own land; they simply agreed to work the land together, splitting the yield according to the amount of land they owned. Even so, only 36 families joined the Association. This was the minimum number of families required by law, a telling indicator of the peasants' interest in associative forms of agricultural production.[35]

On the day the *întovărăşire* was born, at the Provisional Committee meeting led by the same Gheorghe Goina, 94 ha of land situated next to the village, belonging to the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, the school, and the local agricultural office, were "ceded in exchange" to the association. Five days later, another 36 lots were merged. The peasants that had the use of land located in the area designated for the "Saint Ana Peasant Association" were relocated elsewhere by drawing lots. The soil quality of the merged land was so good that those who acquired it through the agrarian reform preferred to join the association rather than lose it. One villager recalled that these peasants "had a stack […] of barley twice as high as mine, though I had two hectares of barley and he only had 40 *ares* of it."[36] But the association did not last long.

Four months later, on February 26, 1950, the inauguration of the new collective farm "Viață Nouă" was filmed for propaganda purposes. The new GAC had 35 families, most of whom had founded the Peasant Association. The minutes of the meeting suggest peasants' reluctance to join:

> Comrade President Goina Gheorghe points out the hardships that had to be overcome to establish the collective farm. The process began in the fall of 1949, when 50 adjacent lots of land were consolidated. With the help of the Party and the mass organization, he worked hard all winter long to persuade those who had joined the association to form this collective farm. But some people, who had let themselves fall under the influence of the class enemy, managed to demoralize some comrades, who were weak and who later withdrew. Comrade Goina informs the members that, together with the 32 remaining families, he has embarked on this road with determination.[37]

Three weeks later the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Romania officially approved the establishment of the GAC "New Life" in Sântana.[38] However, it seems that Comrade Goina himself had little confidence in this new way of collectively working the land. Using his position, he managed to assign five hectares of land to his younger brother and told him to farm it on his own: "If the association doesn't work, we'll still have this other land."[39] My grandmother, Goina's wife, also told me about his reticence:

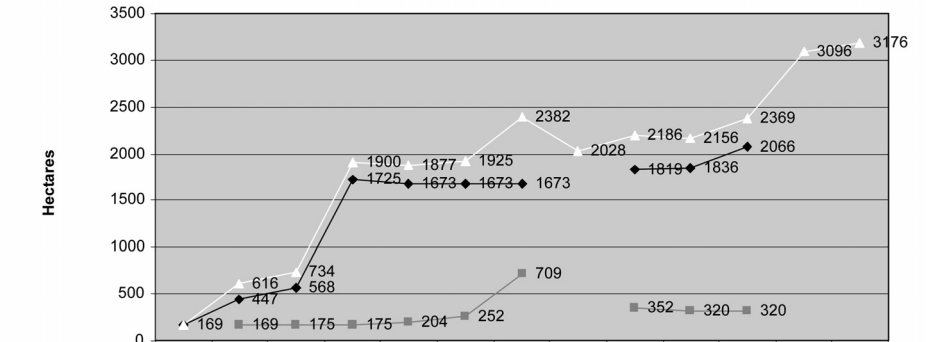
> When he went to visit there [the Soviet Union, G.C.], now I can tell you, Călin, he was not very pleased by what he saw. But he could not back off. You see, he was the chairman of the *plasa* at that time… he was the chairman! He could not say: "Listen to me, brothers, I'm afraid things don't look good!" He kept silent…[40]

Had he opposed collectivization, he would not only have lost the influential and lucrative administrative position he had as GAC President, but he would have lost any possibility of upward mobility as long as the regime was in power.

Everyone I interviewed agreed that the peasants who joined the collective farm first were among the poorest and the least hardworking, or had accumulated large debts,[41] or did not have the tools to work their land, "because nobody joined out of love, you see."[42] Others banked on becoming upwardly mobile due to the new political trends: among the families who joined first, nine heads of household were Communist Party members, two women were members of the Union of Democratic Women of Romania and 21 were members of the Ploughmen's Front.

Below, I examine the growth in GAC membership compared with arable land ownership in Sântana. This makes it possible to trace a three-stage development of the GAC "New Life":

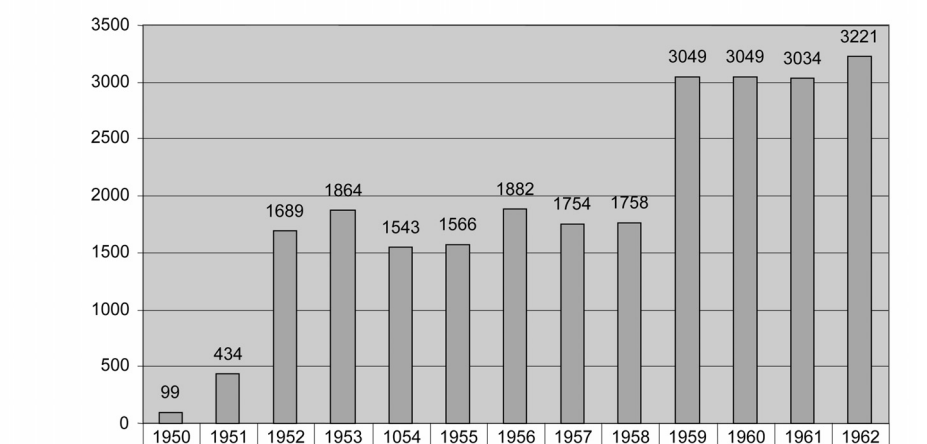
GRAPH 1. *Land owned by GAC "New Life" Santana, brought by members or donated by state, from its foundation to 1962*



	founding	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
from members	169	447	568	1725	1673	1673	1673		1819	1836	2066		
from state		169	175	175	204	252	709		352	320	320		
total surface	169	616	734	1900	1877	1925	2382	2028	2186	2156	2369	3096	3176

Source: Dările de Seamă Anuale, GAC "Viață Nouă" Sântana, 1950–1962; DJAN Arad, fond "CAP 'Viață Nouă" Sântana," files 2/1950–1951, 4/1951–1961, 22/58–65. There is no data on the land surfaces for 1956, 1960, or 1961.

GRAPH 2. *Total members of GAC "New Life" Santana between 1950 and 1962*



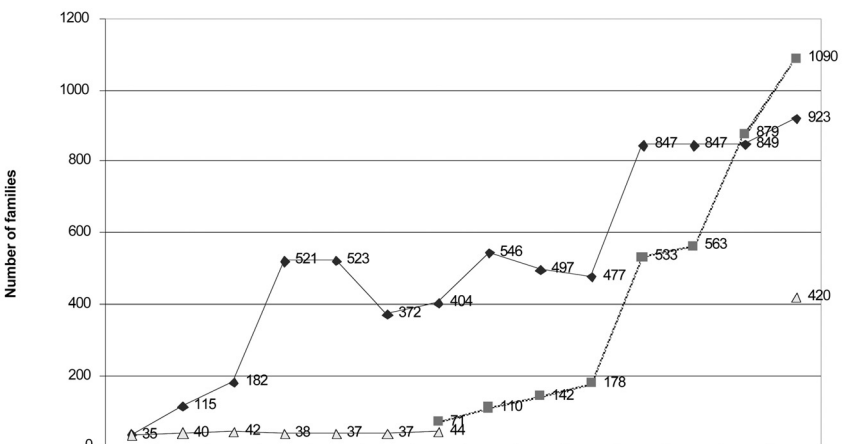
	1950	1951	1952	1953	1054	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
Total members	99	434	1689	1864	1543	1566	1882	1754	1758	3049	3049	3034	3221

Source: Dările de Seamă Anuale, GAC "Viață Nouă" Sântana, 1950–1962; DJAN Arad, fond "CAP 'Viață Nouă' Sântana," files 2/1950–1951, 4/1951-–961, 22/58–65.

The period between 1950 and 1953 was one of growth, ending with more than half of the village's total arable land collectivized and half of its maximum membership attained. This, however, was followed by a period of stagnation between 1954 and 1958, when the GAC experienced almost no growth in terms of land ownership and lost membership. In the period between 1959 and 1962, the village was fully collectivized. These stages of development parallel the sequencing of collectivization at the national level.[43]

To situate the GAC "New Life" in wider local perspective, Graph 3 contrasts its development with that of the other two collectives in the area, the GAC "People's Will" in Caporal Alexa, founded on July 9, 1950, and the GAC "The Second Party Congress" in Comlăuş, founded on December 22, 1955:

GRAPH 3. *The collectivization process in Sântana, 1950–1962, by GAC:*



	foundi ng	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
GAC Santana	35	115	182	521	523	372	404	546	497	477	847	847	849	923
GAC Comlaus							71	110	142	178	533	563	879	1090
GAC Caporal Alexa	35	40	42	38	37	37	44							420

Source: Dările de Seamă Anuale ale GAC "Viață Nouă" Sântana 1950–1962, Dările de Seamă Anuale ale GAC "Al doilea congres al PMR" Comlăuş, 1956–1962, Dările de Seamă Anuale ale GAC "Voința Poporului" Caporal Alexa, 1950–1955.

Although the collective in Caporal Alexa was part of the same generation of collective farms as the GAC "New Life," created by political fiat to serve as models, the former lacked the material infrastructure of the latter, that is, the assets that had been expropriated from the Germans. In addition, this collective was created in a settled community with economically viable farms where people found ways to get around the quota system, relying on kin networks to do so. Moreover,

Caporal Alexa's respected leaders would have nothing to do with the collectivization experiment. Consequently, the collective, with only a small membership that fluctuated between 34 and 42 families, trailed behind over the next ten years. But in the 1960s, in response to concerted state pressure, the others joined en masse.

Comlăuş's collective was formed after the stalled collectivization campaign was launched again at the Second Congress of the Romania's Workers' Party, held in December 1955. It was formed from a nucleus of villagers who were members of the Sântana GAC, which had grown to have twelve field brigades. Creating a GAC in Comlăuş represented the political center's attempt to be more flexible and responsive to local conditions. Even so, the same factors that hindered collectivization in Caporal Alexa accounted for the slow pace in Comlăuş as well, at least during the first three years. But, in 1959, the authorities began the campaign to complete collectivization there as well.

With this general picture in mind, I now turn to a more nuanced discussion of the GAC New Life's three-phase development.

3.2. The first stage of collectivization, Sântana, 1950–1953

Collectivization began early in Sântana, and did not involve the use of physical violence during this first phase. Villagers were mainly subjected to economic pressures, including punitive taxation and "land consolidation." Persuasion work and propaganda were not very effective:

> So, in 1949, they started collectivization; they would go door to door, trying to persuade you […] the guy would blabber on about advantages, how much money you'd make, and who knows what else they'd go on about. And some people would slam the door in their faces, some would curse at them, throw them out, others would listen to what they had to say and so on […] There was one [activist], poor guy, a Hungarian from Arad, he was a musician... He knew all this agriculture stuff so well that he couldn't tell a potato plant from alfalfa![44]

The year 1952 constituted a turning point in the fortunes of the collectivization campaign. In only six weeks the membership of the GAC "New Life" doubled.[45] More middle peasants joined that autumn than in the two previous years; significantly, they did so during and after quotas were collected. The influx of members tripled the agricultural land owned by the cooperative. Table 2 gives a clearer picture of who joined in 1952:

TABLE 2. *Families that joined GAC "New Life" Sântana between September 10, 1952 and March 20, 1953, by social category and ethnicity:*

Social category	*Total families on Sept 10, 1952*	*Families joining on Sept 20, 1952*	*Families joining on Sept 30, 1952*	*Families joining Oct 20, 1952*	*Families joining Oct.30 1952*	*Total of families on Oct 30, 1952*
Middle class peasants	*99*	59	39	46	5	*248*
Poor peasants	40	48	34	33	3	*158*
Peasants without land	96	5	2	2	0	*105*
Ethnicity						
Romanians	*129*	64	42	48	7	*290*
Germans	68	10	16	25	1	*83*
Gypsies	24	36	16	7	0	*120*
Hungarians	14	3	0	1	0	*18*
Total families	*235*	113	74	81	8	*511*

Source: DJAN Arad, fond "CAP 'Viață Nouă" Sântana," file 6/1952–1953, "Dări de seamă statistice," 1952–1959, no pagination.

Those who joined in fall 1952 were largely middle and landless peasants, Germans as well. From the community of colonized Romanians, some had reputations as hardworking persons, unlike the "good-for-nothings" who had founded the collective farm. Everyone I interviewed mentioned that those who joined in the fall had given away their land out of necessity, unable to withstand the mandatory quotas. The amount they owed the state was not based on their actual harvest, but rather on the amount of land cultivated and their taxation bracket. Hence, some colonists who turned a poor harvest had to give everything to the state, with an added sum on top when their entire yield was not enough to meet the quotas set for them.

The impact of taxes on households with limited income—those who lacked the necessary agricultural equipment, farm animals, and labor networks—was over-

whelming. In Sântana, as indicated in Table 2, those most affected were the families either of colonized middle peasants or of land-poor or landless peasants. One colonized middle peasant commented:

> It's true that that first year, and even in 1950, the harvest was good and the people [who had joined] received a bigger share of grains than we were left with, those of us who were still working our land individually. The same in '51 and '52… and so we figured: man, if we work as hard as we can to turn a good crop and then we have to give most of it away in mandatory quotas… So we ended up joining the collective.[46]

Thus, two kinds of incentives operated to compel people to join the collective: 1) the negative impact of over-taxation and reallocations of land far from the village center, and 2) the positive benefits to GAC members (e.g., they worked the best quality fields in the area and had access to various social services). While the first had a greater impact on middle peasants, the second enticed a significant number of poor and landless peasants to join (e.g., landless Germans, and poor Romanians and Gypsies from Comlăuş). Once those most affected by the quotas gave up and joined, others followed their example. Some preferred to sign up in order to avoid the authorities' forcibly exchanging their parcels of land for parcels located far from the village, in the interests of consolidating land for the GAC. As one former colonist recounts: "I joined in '52 too, after they made me move farther and farther away. They reassigned land to me three times, until I was almost in Feldioara [more than 5 km away]. …that's when I decided to join."[47] Unlike the colonized middle peasants in Sântana who joined the GAC in large numbers in the fall of 1952, middle peasants in Comlăuş did not. They were less vulnerable to the effects of the quotas, largely due to a combination of the high soil quality and their diversified inventory of agricultural equipment. Hence, they were able to meet these mandatory requisitions without undue hardship.

Poor Roma and landless Germans comprised a second category of those who joined in fall 1952. Since landless peasants had no land to contribute, they were generally prohibited from joining the collectives except under certain circumstances, as seems to have been the case in Sântana in this period—for some but not all. According to a German informant, "many people wanted to join, but they wouldn't take us because we didn't have any land, we didn't have anything any more."[48] Eventually the GAC accepted those who wanted to join; others chose to commute to the nearby city in search of scarce industrial jobs.[49]

By 1953, most of Sântana's colonized Romanians had succumbed to the regime's economic pressures exerted through the mandatory quotas and had joined the GAC "New Life," as did some poor Germans and Roma. By contrast, most of the Romanians from Comlăuş continued to refuse. However, the GAC's fortunes were soon to be affected by political events.

3.3. The second stage of collectivization: 1954–1958.

The echoes of Stalin's death in 1953 loomed large in the story of collectivization in Sântana. After this development, collectivization came almost to a halt with little increase in the GAC's land until 1958. Although the collective kept the land it had already acquired, it could not keep its members, who left in large numbers. Formally, the Model Charter of every GAC stated that, with the approval of the General Assembly, members could withdraw from the cooperative, leaving half of their land to it. In practice, however, the regime did not generally tolerate defectors (see below). Table 3 illustrates the dynamic of withdrawals from the GAC:

TABLE 3. *Number of families leaving GAC Sântana, by social category:*

Year	*1950*	*1951*	*1952*	*1953*	*1954*	*1955*	*1956*	*1957*	*1958*	*1959*	*1960*	*1961*	*1962*
Landless	0	0	2	1	44	42	8	62	54	2	0	22	0
Poor	0	0	3	20	88	45	3	8	1	0	0	0	0
Middle	0	0	4	31	97	9	5	5	1	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	9	52	*229*	96	16	75	56	2	0	22	0

Source: DJAN Arad, fond "CAP 'Viață Nouă' Sântana," file 1/1945–1949.

GAC members were able to exit the collective in at least three ways. The first was ideologically driven: middle peasants were "unmasked" as *chiaburi* in the interest of "class struggle."[50] This was the least common method of leaving the GAC in Sântana, where the relatively few cases occurred mainly in 1952 and 1953. The colonized Romanians resorted to a second exit route, leaving Sântana to return to their villages of origin, which at that time were still unaffected by collectivization.[51] To forestall this exodus, in 1955 the communist authorities allowed the colonized Romanians to build their own houses in the village, which also paved the path for the Germans to reclaim theirs. The third means of leaving the collective was to petition the GAC's General Assembly. My research suggests that approvals were granted to persons who had brought little or no land to the cooperative, such that their departure would not meaningfully alter the collective's land holdings.[52]

Faced with the loss of membership and a growing labor shortage, the GAC disregarded the initial restrictions on accepting landless peasants and worked to attract them, recruiting the impoverished local Germans in particular. They also sought new colonists, especially from the Apuseni Mountains (in the Western Carpathians), among those left unemployed after the nationalization of the forests. As a result, after 1954, the number of families joining the GAC "without land" constantly outnumbered all other categories (e.g., poor or middle peasants).[53] The largest numbers of landless peasants joined in 1955 and 1956, with 144 and 143 families, respectively. Also, according to oral historical accounts, the

Germans, once incorporated, became an integral part of the collective's operation. Indeed, from 1954 to 1966, the unwritten rule was that GAC's vice president be a German.

Other developments during this period in Sântana are associated with long term processes, hence, are harder to pinpoint. In the early years, many villagers did not believe that the communist regime would last—an expectation fostered by Romania's having had five regime changes between 1936 and 1946—and resisted collectivization. But as the years passed, their resistance faded, as did their enduring hope, when the Soviets crushed the Hungarian revolution in 1956, that "The Americans are coming!"[54]

In addition, the first wave of collectivization shattered peasants' tried and true belief that accumulating more land was the only way to build a solid future for their children. Moreover, the Party-State promoted mass free education, offering 80 percent of the available places in high schools and universities to the children of peasants and workers, with the remainder for the offspring of "bourgeois" and "intellectual" families. Consequently, in stark contrast to the pre-war years, many peasants in Sântana encouraged their children's education (either vocational or theoretical) rather than their use as additional hands for farming. And in view of the quota system, further land accumulation ceased to make sense. For the first time peasants had an incentive not to spend any surplus on buying more land, but on consumption goods and amenities. The "traditional" status markers (e.g., a big harvest or well-fed cattle) and values (e.g., frugality and austerity) changed dramatically. Home improvements became key status symbols, and community values increasingly endorsed leisure and comfort.

After 1956 collectivization began anew. A new collective was established in Comlăuş, but it was unable to consolidate its membership. By 1958, it had only 178 families. Most of the peasants from there and Caporal Alexa opted instead to form peasants associations (*întovărăşiri*) as a better alternative to the socially stigmatized GAC. Despite the existence of the rather well-organized and well-managed GAC "New Life" in Sântana, the rest of the villagers, especially from Comlăuş, refused to join it. Nevertheless, many of those I interviewed recalled their growing fatigue, commensurate with their sense that the communist transformation of Romania was irreversible. Not surprisingly, they began to lose their will to resist collectivization.

3.4 The third stage of collectivization: 1959–1962

The last stage of collectivization in Sântana (see Graph 2) occurred between 1959 and 1962 and reflects the regime's expanded and intensified grip on society. Those who entered the collective in this final phase, in turn, mirrored the major changes that had taken place in Romania in the 1950s. To the extent that peasants who had paid their quotas in the first period were able to resist joining, by the late 1950s, those who had not yet joined had few remaining alternatives. The Party-State had perfected its power to influence its citizens' complicity with their goals:

> Let me tell you something: if you needed something, anything… they would not give it to you unless you joined the *colhoz*. If you were not a *colhoz* member, you didn't qualify. While, if you had joined… Whenever you had to deal with an institution they asked you: "Are you a private owner?" "No, I joined." At that moment, your problems were over. Oh, they really put the screws to us [the non-members, G.C.] during those times, rest assured![55]

Furthermore, by then, the Party-State's powerful presence extended to virtually every dimension of social life. Those who worked in nearby factories were threatened with being fired if they or their relatives refused to join the GAC. Parents of high school or college students were warned that unless they joined the collective their children would be expelled. The peasant associations that existed were also forced to "voluntarily" join the collective farm; they became GAC members almost overnight.

At this stage, most people found joining the collective a traumatic experience and were hesitant to speak about it in detail. I learned from family sources that my maternal grandmother cried every morning on her way to the GAC's fields. She belonged to a middle peasant family in Comlăuş, which had fared well enough even with the tax system, and had also managed to build a new house. But when their daughter was threatened with expulsion from high school in 1961, they finally joined.

A group of middle peasant families from Comlăuş, as well as a few colonists, held out the longest. They joined in 1962, the final year of the collectivization campaign. One of them recounted that he had planned to give up his land and return to his natal village, only to learn that it too had been collectivized almost overnight. He was summoned to Sântana's town hall, where he was physically "shaken up" by the local policeman, who told him that he had to join, since 32 other heads of household had refused to join unless he did.[56] It is nonetheless worth mentioning that he did so only after negotiating with the GAC's president for a certain amount of wood and other construction materials he needed for the new house he was building. But collective memory also emphasizes that two or three families never joined the GAC; they lost their land and suffered other personal affronts, but they never became members.

4. MODERNIZING INFLUENCES OF THE GAC

The collective farm "New Life" represents the case of a "model GAC" which not only proved to be economically efficient, but was also appreciated by Sântana's villagers. As such, its success undermines a prevalent assumption that collective farms were uniformly inefficient enterprises.[57] Overall, those I interviewed viewed the collective as having been a modernizing agent in the village and for their lives, and also revolutionized agricultural production there.[58] Table 4 shows

a general increase in the corn and wheat harvests, and by extension, the general economic performance of the collective, noting a decisive turning point between 1958 and 1959.

TABLE 4. *The average corn and wheat harvest per hectare, in kilograms, for GAC "New Life" Sântana, 1951–1962:*

	1951	*1952*	*1953*	*1954*	*1955*	*1956*	*1957*	*1958*	*1959*	*1960*	*1961*	*1962*
Corn	2,140	2,387	3,200	2,536	2,009	1,973	2,485	2,723	4,577	4,519	5,348	5,207
Wheat	1,610	1,348	2,060	809	1,736	1,346	1,736	1,608	2,320	2,312	2,260	1,900

Source: Dările de Seamă Anuale ale GAC "Viață Nouă" Sântana 1950–1962, Dările de Seamă Anuale ale GAC "Al doilea congres al PMR" Comlăuş, 1956–1962.

The growing yields resulted from mechanization and the use of chemical fertilizers, as well as modern agricultural techniques introduced by the college-trained agronomists who began managing the GAC crops.

In addition to these factors, everyone I interviewed attributed the collective's success to its good management and a strong work ethic. One leitmotif was that hard work paid off: "Here, those who worked earned well."[59] A woman who moved to Sântana as a colonist but did not join the GAC until 1962 remembers: "When you went to the collective, you thought you'd wandered into the city!"[60] Infrastructural improvements and social benefits added to the GAC's reputation. In 1950 alone, the GAC refurbished its headquarters, built a bathroom for its members,[61] and set up a kindergarten and nursery where the members' children were taken care of free of charge until late in the evening. Moreover, the members were entitled to vacation time, something previously unknown to the peasants:

> Comrade Goina received approval from the management of the Moneasa [health resort] for Sântana's collective members to spend a few paid holidays resting there in the mountains. The council will decide who among our hardworking and conscientious members will go to Moneasa. […] Every collectivist will behave in a dignified and civilized manner.[62]

So successful was this innovation that in 1957, the GAC built a small spa hotel of its own in Moneasa. At "Vila Sântana," GAC members could enjoy cheap vacations and undergo medical spa treatments. This appears to have been the first hotel of its kind to be owned by a collective farm.

Further (if indirect) evidence of the GAC's economic success may be gleaned from statistical data on home ownership. Data from the Arad County Statistical Office show that more houses were built in the 1950s and 1960s than between 1900 and 1945:

TABLE 5. *Houses built at Sântana: 1900–1980:*

Time period	1900–1914	1915–1929	1930–1944	1945–1960	1961–1970	1971–1975	1976–1980
New houses	252	319	296	*827*	*668*	237	128

Source: Chelcea and Lățea, *România profundă*, 140.

As can be seen, the 1960s (and 1970s) were years of expansion and economic growth. Most houses were built by the collective's own "construction brigade," and members paid for the building costs in work days for the collective. The construction materials—difficult to obtain in a shortage economy—were also procured through the collective.[63] This marked a turning point: in the 1960s and 1970s, houses were built according to standard blueprints and were modern, large, and overall far better than the typical German houses in Sântana that the colonists so admired when they first arrived in the village. Within a period of 10–12 years, poor Romanian peasants brought to Sântana from villages where "boys slept in the stable because there wasn't enough room in the house" attained incomparably better living standards.

The modernizing impact of the collective in Sântana was also made possible by its relative autonomy, as the collective served as a mediator between its members and the state. Two examples illustrate how this autonomy was manifest.[64] The Sântana farm inaugurated a new system for setting the rate and amount of work in the collective, known as the "individual agreement." In 1957, the management decided members would no longer work in teams when cultivating labor-intensive crops; instead, individuals would contract for up to a hectare of land for which they were directly responsible throughout the year. In return, they received a certain percentage of the crop and half the amount by which they had exceeded planned production. The Sântana GAC leadership undertook this ideologically heretical experiment, betting on their status as a model collective. The crops turned out better, and the individual contract system was accepted and promoted nationally at the 1958 meeting in Constanța celebrating the completion of collectivization in Dobrogea.[65]

Another instance of the collective's relative autonomy occurred when the Ministry of Agriculture issued an ordinance mandating that all horses be killed or sold. The executive council decided to hide some of the horses in a stable in a nearby forest. No one denounced this act of insubordination and the horses survived. (The ordinance was eventually revoked.) This episode shows its members' solidarity and degree of identification with the collective.

The GAC "New Life" was able to exercise a degree of autonomy because of its status as a model collective, its economic success, and the political position of its president, a "hero of socialist work" and a representative to the Grand National Assembly between 1952 and 1989. Then again, economic survival in a shortage

economy presupposes access to resources that are officially available to everyone but, in practice, can be obtained only through a network of privileged relationships with those in charge of their production and distribution. To be able to "sell" to the state the quantities of agricultural products required by the plan while maintaining the members' income at a decent level, the collective leadership frequently resorted to such networks and relationships:

> Once I went to Moldova to get chemical fertilizers and I took a whole slaughtered pig from our farm to the director there. […] Then I went to Piteşti to get some herbicide. There too I took something for the director but I can't even remember what, because the director there was a representative in the Grand National Assembly and that's where he and our president made the arrangement.[66]

It also helped that the GAC's president had access to high-level interpersonal networks unavailable to most other collectives. Then again, the GAC New Life's model collective status allowed those in Sântana to reinterpret according to their own needs or to disregard the self-contradictory and counterproductive directives that most collective farms had to follow to the letter.

5: CONCLUSION: COLLECTIVIZATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Throughout the years, Sântana's villagers experienced sweeping changes in their lives and the world around them. Collectivization opened up new opportunities for social mobility and a much-improved standard of living for many, who experienced a relative increase in their annual incomes and a radical decrease in labor-intensive agricultural tasks. Although the process of colonization initially triggered ethnic and class tensions, especially between Sântana's Germans and the colonized Romanians, the process of collectivization and the way the collective operated contributed to alleviating them in the context of the gradual consolidation of the Romanians' dominant position in the village.

Because the GAC monopolized the major means of production in the village, those who controlled them—the GAC president and management—were promoted to positions of authority, influence, and economic standing in the village. The Germans came to be included among them after the collective's leadership recognized their importance for the GAC. Over time, education rather than Communist Party activity or ethnic background replaced the pre-war criteria of industriousness, frugality, and land as prerequisites for holding leadership positions. Honor and high status were now accorded to those who graduated from university—the agronomists, doctors, teachers, and new generation of intellectuals produced under the Communist regime.

Collectivization was accompanied by other modernizing trends. Health care, diet, education, and leisure opportunities improved, as did access to them. Infrastructural and human resources expanded. For example, in 1960, 245 households had electricity; by the end of the 1970s, Sântana was entirely electrified. In the 1940s there were but one or two doctors and no college-educated teachers in the village. By the 1960s there were 28 doctors, and by 1975, 89 college-educated teachers.[67] Villagers began to spend money on consumer goods such as radios, washing machines, and refrigerators.[68] A large house, a motorcycle, or later on, a car gradually replaced land accumulation as markers of high social standing, as did jobs not requiring manual labor. More than that, it also presupposed having educated offspring, meaning that children were sent to school.

Despite the wrenching changes wrought by collectivization, on balance the existence of the GAC "New Life" had a positive impact on everyday life in Sântana. There, collectivization was a success story. Would that it had indeed been able to serve as the model it was ideologically intended to be.

Translated from Romanian by Liana Grancea and Gail Kligman

NOTES

1 On the "primitive techniques and irrational organization of holdings" that contributed to the "depressed" state of Romania's peasantry in the 1930s and 1940s, see Henry L. Roberts, *Rumania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), 57–61.

2 On the issues native ethnographers confront, see Jennifer Platt, "On Interviewing One's Peers," *The British Journal of Sociology,* 32 (1981) 1, 75–91; and Maxine Baca Zinn, "Insider Field Research in Minority Communities," in Robert Emerson, ed. *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations* (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2001), 159–166.

3 For details about the village of Sântana, see Jakob Hübner, *Monographie der Großgemeinde Sanktanna* (Gesamtherstellung Lahrer Anyeiger GmbH, Lahr: Herausgegeben von der Heimatsortgemeinschaft Sanktanna, 1986); and Liviu Chelcea and Daniel Lăţea, *România profundă în communism* (Bucharest: Nemira, 2000).

4 Until 1950, Sântana in Romanian was Sfânta Ana, when it was changed to Sîntana (Sântana after 1990). Comlăuş was also known as Alt Sanktanna in German and Sântana Veche in Romanian (Old Sântana) and so Sântana was also referred to as Sântana Nouă in Romanian, Neue Sanktanna in German, and Újszentanna in Hungarian (New Sântana).

5 Comlăuş/Komlos appears as a hamlet on the tax lists of the Archdiocese of Pancota, a neighboring village. See Romeo Trifa, *Monografia comunei Sântana, Raionul Criş, Regiunea Crişana* (Manuscript, Sântana library, 1967), 21.

6 I draw on Andreas Oster's work on the German colonization of Santana. For a partial version of Oster's work, see http://www.sanktanna.info/romania/fundcercet.html, accessed on November 7, 2005.

7 See http://www.sanktanna.info/romania/fundcercet.html, accessed on November 7, 2005.
8 The Hungarians, probably due to their small numbers, do not act, and are not perceived, as a separate village community.
9 Victoria Sinescu, *Geografia populației şi a forței de muncă din cadrul comunei Sântana, județul Arad* (Cluj-Napoca: Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, 1986), 61.
10 My maternal grandmother complained that the daughter-in-law had to be content with only a wing and some potatoes.
11 On autonomous, self-sustaining peasant household units, see Katherine Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers: Three Centuries of Political, Economic, and Ethnic Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Katherine Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Martha Lampland, *The Object of Labor: Commodification in Socialist Hungary* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
12 Lampland, *The Object of Labor,* 14.
13 For the relations between Romanians and Germans in Sântana, see Chelcea and Lățea, *România profundă în communism*.
14 B.A., male, 70 years old, Romanian, foreman, Comlăuş.
15 Another major social dividing line in the village was between *țărani* or peasants, whether rich or poor, and *domni*, a term lumping together merchants, craftsmen, state clerks, and the local intelligentsia. That social cleavage was readily displayed when walking in the village: peasants (Germans and Romanians) wore their local "traditional" garb whereas *domni* donned modern city clothing.
16 The actual number of Germans deported remains unknown; the figures I use are estimates. See, for example, Gheorghe-Dorel Zarna, *Svabii, un subiect încheiat?* (Arad: Sofia, 1998), 77–79.
17 Decree 187 of March 23, 1945 confiscated the entire "land and agricultural properties belonging to the German citizens, and to the Romanian citizens of German ethnicity, who had collaborated with Nazi Germany."
18 For details on the colonization process see Dumitru Şandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945 în România* (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000).
19 Single veterans were ineligible to receive land. V.B., male, 84 years old, colonized middle peasant from Halmagiu.
20 There were no Roma in Sântana, hence their absence in this description.
21 G.A., female, 72 years old, colonized from Avram Iancu, Bihor county, wife of the GAC president.
22 S.A., female, 80 years old, settler from Valea Drăganului, Cluj county, agricultural worker.
23 E.W., female, 76 years old, worker, German from Sântana.
24 The state only gave the Germans legal ownership of their houses (confiscated in 1945) in 1956, after the Romanians had already begun to build their own.
25 Selling land gained through the land reform was illegal; some used it as collateral to get bank loans that they then failed to repay, and so lost their land.
26 For a comprehensive discussion of the quota system see Octavian Roske, "Colectivizarea şi mecanismul colectării. Repere social-politice," in Dorin Dobrincu and Constantin Iordachi, eds., *Tărănimea şi puterea: Procesul de colectivizare în România, 1949–1962* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2005), 113–135.

27 G.C., male, 61 years old, Romanian, teacher, Comlăuş. The young man who was beaten developed a brain tumor and died two years later. Such violence occurred during the period of forced quota collections, not during collectivization.
28 Dan Cătănuş and Octavian Roske, eds. *Colectivizarea Agriculturii în România, Dimensiunea politică 1949–1953,* vol. 1: *1949–1953* (Bucharest: Institutul Național Pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 65.
29 The link between the Communist Party and the agrarian reform in Sântana may have been fostered, in part, when Lucreţiu Pătraşcanu, one of the Romanian Workers Party's then most popular figures, ceremonially presented the first land ownership titles.
30 N.G., male, 78 years old, colonized from Avram Iancu, Bihor county, agricultural worker.
31 "The Germans, they had the first [tractors]: they had Lanz-Buldogs, and then they brought Hanomags, Deutzs." B.A., male, 70 years old, Romanian, mechanic, Comlăuş.
32 65 percent of Sântana's arable land was classified in the highest soil-quality tier (the agro-productive category number one); 34 percent in the second (the agro-productive category number two) and only 1 percent in the third category. For comparison, see Kligman in this volume.
33 The leader of the families from the Zărand area was Varga Toader, who became the chairman of the village council for agrarian reform and, later, president of an alternative and less successful local GAC.
34 V.B., male, 78 years old, colonized from Hălmagi area, Arad county. He refused to join the GAC until the very end.
35 Direcţia Judeţeană Arad a Arhivelor Naţionale (DJAN Arad), fond "CAP 'Viaţă Nouă' Sântana," file 1/1949–1945.
36 V.B., male, 78 years old, colonized Romanian, agricultural worker.
37 DJAN Arad, fond "CAP "Viaţă Nouă' Sântana," file 1/1949–1945.
38 Decision no. 267, March 16, 1950, published in the *Official Monitor of the People's Republic of Romania*, no. 30, March 30, 1950.
39 G.T., male, 69 years old, GAC brigade-leader, brother of the GAC president.
40 When I asked if he had been afraid, she responded: "Of course he was afraid." G.A., female, 72 years old, colonized from Avram Iancu, Bihor county, wife of the GAC president.
41 See the fragment on Sântana in Levy, the present volume.
42 B.S., male, 78 years old Romanian from Comlăuş, middle peasant.
43 See chapters by Levy and Oprea, this volume.
44 G.A., female, 72 years old, colonized from Avram Iancu, Bihor county, wife of the GAC president.
45 DJAN Arad, fond "CAP 'Viaţă Nouă' Sântana," file 7/1952–1953.
46 M.M., male, 81 years old, middle peasant, colonist, former vice-president of the GAC.
47 N.G., male, 78 years old, middle peasant, colonist from Avram Iancu commune, Bihor county.
48 Z.F., male, 65 years old, construction worker, German, Sântana.
49 The GAC president is on record as having threatened in a meeting that those who leave the GAC "will have to commute to the city." DJAN Arad, fond "CAP 'Viaţă Nouă' Sântana," 7/1952–1953, "Proces verbal al consiliului de conducere," July 7, 1953.
50 The General Assembly meeting on May 29, 1954, provides a good example. It expelled M.G. from the GAC on the grounds he was an "enemy of the people"; The General Assembly *decided to sue him*.

51 Almost all of the colonized Romanians from Halmagiu left. One man from Avram Iancu recounted his intention to return to his village: "I planned to leave, I actually carried one ton of wheat [back to Avram Iancu, C.G.], I wanted to leave when Petrea Surii and Mancea left too, because they left for good then." NG, 78 years old, man, colonized from Avram Iancu, Bihor county. In the end, he decided to stay.

52 The minutes of the General Assembly of GAC, especially in 1954, include long lists of the names of those who petitioned to leave. As a rule, the decision was written to the right of each name: "approved" (including variants such as "approved as he is a drunkard," "approved as s/he does not participate in collective work" or, much more often "approved as s/he is ill" or "…is old."

53 The GAC records, in keeping with national standards, do not mention ethnicity. Nonetheless, I found a hand-written source from the GAC's 1955 annual report that notes 173 German families, 150 Romanian families, 27 Roma families and 22 Hungarian families.

54 One man said that he renounced the lucrative position of brigade leader, fearing that "The Americans will come." Another peasant was nicknamed "the American" because he was incessantly speaking about the coming of the GI's.

55 S.A., female, 82 years old, colonized Romanian, agricultural worker who joined the GAC in 1962.

56 This was a common tactic used by the police and peasants alike.

57 See Chris M. Hann, *The Skeleton at the Feast: Contributions to Eastern European Anthropology* (University of Kent: Centre for Social Anthropology and Computing, 1995), 37.

58 While this view was retrospectively expressed, the archival materials from the period support this overall assessment.

59 S.A., female, 82 years old, colonized Romanian, agricultural worker who joined the GAC in 1962.

60 This impression came from the GAC's efficiency and effective organization.

61 *GAC Yearly Record*, 1950 (Darea de seamă pe anul 1950), in DJAN Arad, fond "CAP 'Viață Nouă' Sântana," file 2/1950–1951.

62 DJAN Arad, fond "CAP 'Viață Nouă' Sântana," file 7/1952–1953, September 1952.

63 At least three non-GAC members mentioned having obtained building materials through the GAC. Its influence in the community was not limited to its members only.

64 The previously discussed instance of how members exited from the GAC is another example of its relative autonomy.

65 See *Scânteia,* no. 4182 (5 April 1959), 1.

66 M.M., male, 81 years old, middle colonized peasant, former GAC vice-president.

67 See the "Caietul statistic al comunei Sântana, 1989" [*Statistical Booklet of Sântana*, 1989], Arad County Statistics department.

68 One of the modernizing items was indeed the alarm-clock. It replaced the roosters' song as an indicator of the time in the morning.

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"Here in Reviga, There Was Nobody to Wage the Class Struggle": Collectivization in Reviga, Bărăgan Plain (Bucharest Region)

LIVIU CHELCEA

This paper undertakes a case study of collectivization in the commune of Reviga, located in Ialomița county, and in the larger Bărăgan region. First, I will describe several characteristics situating the Bărăgan region historically and culturally, since that context played an important role in Reviga's emergence and transformation. In the 19th century, the Bărăgan region was an internal colony and a sparsely inhabited borderland with many large estates, which experienced successive waves of colonization during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Compared with neighboring villages or other regions of Romania, Reviga was collectivized relatively late (1958–1959). This raises the question: to what extent collectivization was influenced by the longevity of its settlement, e.g., thirty years before collectivization, or much earlier. A similar question arises about the ancestry of the peasants: did it matter that some villagers were first-generation settlers in Reviga at the moment of collectivization, whereas others had roots in the village going back two or three generations? Did it matter that, in some cases, until the time of collectivization, some villagers had two households, one in Bărăgan and one in the area they were originally from?

My argument is that the above-mentioned factors had only a minor role in collectivization. Instead, what mattered most was the weak institutional infrastructure of the state, which was insufficiently strong to exercise coercion over the rural populace. According to several of the villagers interviewed, Reviga was relatively isolated—it was situated 15 km away from the nearest railway—which may have hindered higher ranking officials from traveling there frequently to "persuade" the villagers of the benefits of collectivization. Another observation that buttresses my argument is that Reviga was not highly dependent on the state prior to collectivization. For instance, the number of state employees was much lower than in neighboring villages benefiting from different state facilities, such as state-owned farms (GAS, or *Gospodărie Agricolă de Stat*), or railway tracks. In short, the power relations between the state and populace were initially in favor of the latter. Nonetheless, it is somewhat surprising that the state had difficulty intervening in this part of the Bărăgan. The Bărăgan region in general, and villages like Reviga

were fairly "legible," in James Scott's terms, to the state's gaze.[1] None were hard to reach geographically, and they did not display random settlement patterns. These two factors are usually hypothesized when the state's efforts to centralize, control and homogenize were thwarted.

The present study is structured in five parts. In the first part I will introduce prewar Reviga and the history of the Bărăgan region. Then I will present data on postwar transformations, the fate of the *chiaburi*, the requisition system, enrollment in the collective farm (GAC) and the restructuring of labor and time. The sources of this study consists mostly of 43 interviews the author conducted in 2002 with elders from Reviga.[2] The people interviewed differed in terms of how much they recollected from those times, or how much they were willing to recollect. Some who had come from poor families in Reviga skipped rapidly over the collectivization period, whereas rich peasants talked longer and in greater detail about it. The former group also had scant recollections about the postwar period. For instance, they broadly referred to the period in which requisitions had been imposed as "the time when Ceauşescu came to power." (In fact, Ceauşescu's ascent happened a decade later.) Those who had experienced greater suffering as a result of collectivization had a more accurate sense of when the GAC had been created, and when they had signed up for it. They recalled these significant events with only a one or two year margin of error.

1. REVIGA BEFORE THE WAR: REGIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY AND LAND SCARCITY

At the time of collectivization, Reviga included three villages: Reviga, Rovine, and Mircea cel Bătrân (see Map 1, page 496). Each of these will be described in some detail. Reviga, the largest of them, was created in the first half of the 19th century by shepherds who settled in the Bărăgan region. Two of my oldest subjects, aged 80 and 89, recalled that their great-grandparents had raised cows and sheep. Reviga had the most fertile land of all. Rovine was 1.5 km away from Reviga, and was initially composed of settlers coming from six neighboring villages. The village was the result of a small reform in agriculture in the late 1880s granting land to newlyweds.

Rovine was also the poorest of the three villages. One of the respondents referred to it as a "village of newcomers of all sorts, of shepherds and cowherds"[3] They settled in Rovine between 1893 and 1921. Most of them were considered poor, as they owned only two or three hectares of land, but there were also a few middle peasants among them. They used to work the land of Reviga families or on the neighboring estate.

The third village, Mircea cel Bătrân, was entirely the product of the 1921 land reform. It was created by colonists coming from a village in Ialomița county (Gârbovi, 40 km east of Reviga) and also from the village of Bozioru in the Buzău

Mountains. The village came to life in 1929. Initially, about 200 families, most of them young, were given 687 ha of land confiscated from the main estate in the area. Although the villagers gradually built homes in Mircea in the early 1930s, many in fact owned two houses, one in Mircea and one in the mountains. We can explain this by the family and community structures already in place in Bozioru, but also by the fact that the plain and mountain areas involved were naturally complementary. One woman recalled: "My parents used to work in Mircea during the summer and then go home [to Bozioru] during the winter. There we had temporary houses. Only the children settled here."[4]

Sustained ties with Bozioru were maintained until the GAC was established, at which time a few families moved back to the mountains. More numerous were the 70 families from the village of Gârbovi, situated in the plains, who went back to their home village. They "transferred" their land to Gârbovi, preferring to join the local GAC there, because Gârbovi was richer. The GAC was set up in Gârbovi in 1957, and in Mircea in 1959. Before 1945 the peasants from Mircea worked more for Motoi, the local landowner, than for the *chiaburi* of Reviga. After the 1921 reform, only 2,000 ha remained of the 9,000 ha this landlord had owned before. Several interviewees recalled that peasants from Argeş had also worked on the Motoi estate. Motoi had close ties with Ştefan Mitrănescu, the mayor, who allegedly forced peasants to work for the landlord. The latter had at his disposal a direct means to compel the peasants to work for him, as before 1945 he regulated access to the village commons. Descriptions of working on the estate frequently report crop theft.

The history of Reviga is, to a certain extent, a metonym for the history of Bărăgan. A vast expanse scarcely inhabited in the early 19th century, this region was an internal frontier primarily used for grazing. Until 1850–1860, the local economy consisted mainly of rearing cattle, which were pastured on the large village commons, and exporting them to the Habsburg Empire. When shepherds became plowmen, their temporary dwellings were transformed into permanent villages. Following this major transformation, locals practiced large-scale agriculture in Bărăgan, which meant that they often had to work on large estates located far away from their home villages. The consequences of this arrangement fell entirely on the peasants' shoulders. They included the exhaustion of the work force (awakening at 3 a.m. and returning late at night), the deterioration of horse-pulled carts, the problem of ensuring fodder for horses, absences from home and having to sleep outdoors. Most peasants were thus forced to "strike deals" with the landlords on whose estates their villages were situated. (One can compare this state of affairs with the relation between Prussian estates and small peasant households as described by Karl Kautsky.)[5] One actor needed the other, similarly to how capitalist employers and workers needed each other. Nonetheless, peasants in Bărăgan were relatively more prosperous than their counterparts in Central and Eastern Wallachia, due to the region's abundant land.

1.1. How did social structures changed in Reviga after the 1921 land reform?

According to C.D., the daughter of the man who served as mayor from 1907 to 1946, Reviga's population before the 1921 land reform consisted of poor plowmen, landlords and a handful of *chiaburi*.[6] After World War I, new *chiaburi* emerged from the ranks of peasants who had moved up the social ladder through education and military service. Upon returning to their village, many of these peasants held positions in the local administration. Since the 1921 reform restructured ownership more than agriculture itself, many peasants sold their land (those known as "strangers," "drunks," "shepherds" and "cowherds," understood broadly as a moral category) or leased it out. The main reason for selling was that many peasants had no horse or cart and thus no means to pay their taxes. The Roma did not benefit at all from the reform, as they were blacksmiths and fiddlers.[7] Given the structure of land after the 1921 reform, one category of peasants (the future *chiaburi*) benefited considerably from it; these people served as important mediators between the community and powerful economic centers in the region. The Army purchased cattle, horses, pigs and corn from these *chiaburi*.[8] About 70 percent of the peasants who were neither rich nor self-sufficient had to lease land or seek daily work from the *chiaburi* or the local landlord. Several interviewees claimed that the *chiaburi* in Reviga were generally honest and extremely hard working, and required them to work equally hard. A respondent who came from a poor family, however, said, "The well-to-do were boorish types. They wouldn't even let you take a break. They told us 'If you want to smoke a cigarette, do it on your way to work.'"[9]

2. POST-WAR REVIGA

2.1. Political transformations after 1945

Most of my interviewees selectively remembered the post-1945 situation. Prominent among their recollections were references to the famine of 1946–1947, the requisitions and the collective farm. The only person who offered specific information was C.D., the former mayor's daughter, who said that after 1945 everybody went communist.[10] By "everybody" she was referring to the commune's administrative leadership. According to her story, her father, Ştefan Mitrănescu, tried to ingratiate himself with the Romanian Workers' Party around the 1946 elections, and even got into a fight with a nephew of his, then a member of the Romanian Peasants' Party. During this fight, Mitrănescu shouted: "You dope, can't you see? It's 'Our guys leave, our guys return!'" Mitrănescu kept his mayoral seat until 1948, when he was informed that he could no longer hold office. He was replaced by a "wicked man" from Rovine. The new mayor used to summon the *chiaburi* to the town hall for chores. He allegedly appropriated for his own home the furniture of a family of *chiaburi* whose house was turned into the

new town hall after 1945. C.D. also recalled that after the 1946 elections, instructors from factories in Bucharest used to come to Reviga and work at the town hall for four or five months.

The recruitment of the new local elite evinced a striking feature. Several of my interviewees mentioned that some of the new communists had been members of the Iron Guard. In the words of a woman from Mircea:

> E.A.: The losers had joined the communists. I.L. [who joined the Party in 1945][11] had worn the green shirt; he had been in the Iron Guard. He was looking for a bone to chew.
> L.C.: Who were the other communists?
> E.A.: Take D.C., one of the more decent Gypsies, whose mother was Romanian and whose father a Gypsy fiddler. They used to shift affiliations, from the Iron Guard to the communists. Some of the members of the Guard used to organize [Party] meetings.
> L.C.: How did you know that?
> E.A.: They used to rally and spread propaganda. M.M. [a civil servant with the town hall in the 1950s] was also a member of the Guard and a communist and whatnot."[12]

One of the main tasks of the new local elite was to struggle against the *chiaburi* during the so-called de-chiaburization campaigns (*deschiaburire*). The Communal Council, the police and occasionally the Securitate were all involved in getting rid of the *chiaburi*. Although official sources on this topic give us little to go on, those who had been directly affected offered additional insights. It seems that in the late 1940s, Mitrănescu's son (C.D.'s brother) was the county prefect.[13] The mayor's daughter told me that one night her brother sent word to her instructing her to visit all the *chiaburi* in the village immediately and try to persuade them to give their land to the collective farm. She recalled that some of the *chiaburi* refused at the outset and asked for more time to think. At that point the former mayor began to hide. He went to his sister in Moldavia and also to his in-laws in Ploieşti. Movilă, the new mayor, allegedly beat C.D. to find out where her father was. Accusing her of being a "tool of the *chiaburi*," he tied her hands, put her up against a wall, and slapped her. On another occasion he came to throw her out of her house. When he began beating her again, she cried for help and was lucky enough to be heard by a neighbor, who came to her rescue. She was not the only one in this situation, she recalled, as the new mayor used to summon the *chiaburi* to the town hall and force them to donate the GAC their land and tools. News of his abuses spread, and eventually Movilă was restrained by his bosses and underlings. For instance, when the deputy mayor found out about his violence against C.D. he admonished the mayor with the following words: "You must not trample on the moral tenets of the working class." Another person in a position to criticize the mayor for his actions was the district representative, who was also friends

with the deputy mayor. Interviewees described him as more compassionate than the mayor.

In addition to the former mayor's daughter, I found four other individuals who had been listed as *chiaburi.* In Reviga, 86 people had been named *chiaburi*: 61 were from the village of Reviga, 23 from Rovine and two from Mircea. The town hall archives contain a list of "*chiaburi* households that exploited and continue to exploit,"[14] giving the amount of land each one owned, the number (and occasionally the age) of their children, whether they leased out their land, and what tools they had. For some names, political affiliation was also recorded, such as "former member of the Peasant's Party" or "enemy of the regime." Of these *chiaburi*, 43 owned less than 10 ha of land. Some of them were listed with specific reasons: they were innkeepers; they owned agricultural equipment, tractors, wool combers, equipment to produce brandy; they had had textile stores, leased land to other peasants, or allegedly exploited the work of others. In other cases, however, it is hard to infer why someone was labeled a *chiabur*.

Such is the case of a peasant with no children who owned only 5 ha, a simple reaper, and a tool for marking the land. Another in the same situation owned only 4.85 ha and a reaper, and he had a small child.[15] In a way, these types of peasants were the most privileged of *chiaburi*, as they did not have to give large requisitions. I interviewed one of them, a man highly respected for his talent at building agricultural equipment.[16] His file read: "he owns 6.18 hectares of land, a steam thresher, a corn processor, a winnowing machine, and a circular saw; he exploits both his land and his equipment by hiring peasants to work for him; he has two small children."[17] When asked about requisitions, he said that he could cope with them; he had to contribute about 1,000–1,200 kilos per hectare. By contrast, the *chiaburi* who lived only off the land had it much harder. He named two *chiaburi* in this situation, who owned 22.5 ha and 32.5 ha of land respectively. Along the same lines, he also mentioned a woman whose husband had been arrested and who had to work the land herself. He helped her with oats for the horse she had leased from him and gave her some flour at the mill, as the woman was left with nothing to live on.[18]

Some 32 families owned between 10 and 20 ha of land. In addition to having many of the traits of the first category of *chiaburi*, their files often read that they "exploited the work of others." Interestingly, the agricultural equipment they owned is not mentioned as often as with the previous group of *chiaburi*. One can surmise that *chiaburi* in the former category had either sold their land or made a profitable investment in equipment. Finally, the archives contain a third category of families, those owning more than 20 ha of land. Only two had more than 35 ha. They were described in terms similar to the second category, differing from the latter in having (unsurprisingly) hired more farmhands.

I interviewed the wife of the former schoolteacher in Reviga about the condition of being a *chiabur*; she had been a teacher herself and was 89 years old in 2002. Other respondents portrayed her husband as a cruel man, who used to beat the children. (Although I found some documents and denunciations in this

respect, I have no way of knowing what in the reports was accurate and what was a provocation). The wife enjoyed a better reputation than her husband.[19] They had been officially listed as *chiaburi* in 1952, for which her husband was fired even though they had organized the building of the local school together. He hid for three and a half years, fearing arrest and deportation to the Danube–Black Sea forced labor camps. At first he hid in a hole in the ground during the daytime. Later he fled across the fields to some friends, after the local policeman, accompanied by two other men, paid his wife a visit. The two men asked his wife if she had rooms for rent, but she turned them down, explaining that she had two children. They continued to buy time, asking for a glass of water or making conversation. In the beginning, the woman did not know who the two civilians were and what they wanted, but noticed the pistol one of them carried. At that point she thought they might be from the Securitate and tried to get rid of them. After this episode, her husband hid in haystacks in the field during the summer, and with his family or with trustworthy friends in wintertime. His wife recalled that one summer they found a note concealed in a corncob that her husband had thrown into the yard. The note indicated where he was hidden, that he was sick and that his lip was bleeding. The family found the note only three days later.

The woman also said that her daughter had been repeatedly expelled from school and that *chiaburi* were often beaten up. Luckily, she could avoid the beating because she was pregnant. The authorities had summoned several *chiaburi* to the town hall, but the mayor's wife personally stepped in for her, threatening the officials should anything happen to the pregnant woman. The woman's daughter added that when she was little, the police used to whip her and call her a "cub of the *chiabur*." One winter she saved her father's life by having a crisis of nerves. He had come home, and suddenly her mother thought she heard the sound of boots. The girl started to scream hysterically: "He's not here! He's not here!" scaring away the investigators. This story ended somewhat unexpectedly, as the schoolteacher was pardoned circa 1955–1956 and, later on, even joined the persuasion teams. District officials would urge him: "Tell people, Mister [D], not to wait any longer."

One *chiabur* recalled: "the district had decided that I was a *chiabur* and was on a list with the richer among us. Communism decided I was a *chiabur*."[20] The town hall people often assigned him chores. For instance, he was supposed to be "on work duty" to transport people whenever Party officials and the police came into Reviga.[21] The last chairman of the collective farm related some stories about *chiaburi* as well.[22] His godfather had been listed as a *chiabur* because he owned 14 ha of land, but mostly because he owned a corn-sowing machine. In 1952, he was arrested because he could not fulfill his requisition quotas. He was sentenced to eight years in jail but died in 1953, after only a year of imprisonment. My respondent said: "In 1952 I gave him everything, as I wanted to save him, but he was a loose canon." He also remembered about ten *chiaburi* who had been sentenced to hard labor at the Canal, as well as about people who fled the village into the mountains:

> I remember one of them. He had not been at home for three months. I was returning home from the collective farm, when I saw N.I., who had grown a black beard. He asked me not to give him away. I replied: "Go home, man!" Many years later, I found out that N.I.'s son—he must have been eight years old at that time—had been left alone in the fields and when his father returned, he became epileptic, and that's how he was for the rest of his life.

Interviews revealed also the residual character of having been once listed as a *chiabur*. One of my respondents mentioned that being chiaburi left its mark on people even after collectivization was accomplished: "It didn't matter that we had purged our chiabur past, we were still seen as *chiaburi*." This statement suggests that suspicion and stigmatization were still present among the other villagers.

2.2. Requisitions

A former agriculture inspector gave me an overview of requisition (or quotas) system. According to him, quotas were set in place from 1947 to 1956 but were canceled in 1956 following the Hungarian Revolution and the riots of *chiaburi* from Ineu and Sântana.[23] When asked if peasants were left with anything after paying their dues, he said that some families were, but that the *chiaburi* were taxed very heavily. Middle peasants could fulfill the requisition requirements and were left with roughly half of their harvest:

> Middle peasants sometimes complained. […] They sometimes had to give up their chickens and pigs. There were mobile collection centers that went directly to the Căzăneşti train station and to the warehouse. They came whenever you called them, summer or fall. If you didn't fulfill your requisitions, you weren't allowed to use the mill.[24]

This respondent also mentioned that 10–12 people were involved in collecting the requisitions: the commune-level commissioner (*împuternicitul comunal*) himself, the town hall representatives (most of whom were factory workers, between 1949 and 1957), the mayor, the town hall secretary, two other collectors from the State Commission for Cereal Collection, and a district representative. The district representative and the mayor had the most power and were very demanding. The commune-level commissioner was in charge of shipping produce and cereal. Peasants brought their carts in front of the town hall and were dispatched to the mobile collection centers stationed around the region.

Even more exacting than requisitions was the tax on farmland and on peasants' courtyards; these were collected by the district inspector. Although the tax was not high at the beginning, it went up after 1957, when requisition quotas ceased. Peasants with tax arrears were usually summoned to the town hall. Another respondent had been a "thresher representative" and an innkeeper at various times during the 1950s and 1960s. When asked about the district repre-

sentatives he said, "They were first-class idiots."[25] Tax collectors were recruited from the neighboring villages; the mayor was from Bucharest. He forced peasants to fill their carts with produce, while he and his people herded requisitioned pigs and cattle into the town hall yard. Whenever peasants threshed their wheat, the mayor and the district representative were always on site. The district representative was sent to monitor the situation because regime authorities suspected that local collectors sided with the peasants, allowing them to give the state less wheat than they owed. When interviewed, however, the district representative disavowed this, arguing instead that he was afraid and that he felt exposed to intrigues spun by the peasants. This is how he described the requisitions:

> You were assigned quotas based on the land you owned. The town hall decided what you would sow too. "How many hectares do you own? Three! One with corn, one with wheat, and the other one with beans. That's your requisition." You had to comply with it, and no seeds were provided either. The collector used to come into your own yard, instead of your going to him [except for wheat that was collected directly at the thresher, L.C.]. If you were unable to give him beans, he would take other produce. If you failed to give him anything, you had arrears for the next spring.

Could villagers negotiate with the collectors? Most respondents said this was impossible, as the commissions collected produce in the fields and showed no mercy. Only two interviewees claimed to have secured some "deals," and even to have carried on commerce during those times. One of them stated,

> It was possible to "work" the requisitions system. If you could bribe the warehouse people, they would give you extra and even an invoice. The pub owner's son, T.P., helped us do this trick. We used to buy oil, take it to Bucharest in cans and sell it there. My partner became friends with the Party secretary, who liked to drink. My partner used to say to me: "Let's go, I arranged it all with the secretary."

Another interviewee reported that he could sometimes reduce the pressure by offering a bottle of brandy. A respondent who owned much land yet had not been declared a *chiabur* described the situation as follows:

> For my 12 hectares, I had to give them 3–4,000 kg of corn per hectare. They took my wheat at the thresher, but not my hay. Whether you had a cow or not, you had to give them milk, 800 liters per year, depending on how much land you owned. The same applied to meat. For 12 hectares, you owed them 80 kilos of meat. You would get 60 *bani* [a division of the *leu*, the Romanian currency] for each kilo of wheat and 2 lei for a kilo of corn. After the thresher, you had to go to the silo in Căzăneşti.

When asked why the requisitions were demanded in the first place, the respondent replied: "Because the state had nowhere else to turn to for produce."[26]

A former *chiabur* described how some of his belongings had been sequestered, then sold, and how he managed to hide some of his harvest:

> They would overwhelm you with debts so that you could never pay them all. They took away a whole summer's worth of work. "Do you have anything else to give?" Well, I paid what I owed. They impounded my belongings. They took away my clothes and the sewing machine. They took away my corn, my fattest lamb, my suit, my fur coat. I hid the lamb in the house, and you should have seen how the lamb was looking at itself in the mirror. All they took from me they sold at auction in the Slobozia market. When they came to collect the requisitions, you had to accommodate them and to feed them. "You're not off the hook," they would say. The moment they showed up they said: "Cook that chicken for me. Fetch me a cup of wine." The well-off used to hide stuff with their poorer relatives. Some of them helped us, but with others, you hid stuff with your relatives and never got it back. We even dug a hole in the ground to hide some of our harvest. We used to insulate it by burning wheat straws in it first. You could fit between 4,000 and 5,000 kilos of wheat in the hole. But you had to work on it at night, as neighbors would report everything. Beware of your neighbor! If he did not give you away, his son or daughter did.[27]

Other respondents confessed that they used to hide cereals in piles of hay and, quite frequently, in underground holes, many of which still exist today. Whereas most peasants resorted to hiding a part of their produce, some also tried to resist the system. This is how one of them tried to delay the collectors' work by arguing that the impounding of his belongings was tantamount to theft:

> If you didn't give them your cereals, they would take your house. A tax collector came to my house and I still owed two or three thousand *lei*. I told him: "Give me a week so that I can go to Căzăneşti." He refused. He snatched the wall hanging and my wife's clothes. My wife started to cry. I told her, "Shut up! He's not taking anything." He also found a bag of corn. I shouted, "Drop everything right now!" I shook him hard: "Do you have a search warrant?" My woman urged me to leave him alone or I'd end up in prison. I kept saying that this was theft. Other collectors, from different areas, were even more merciless. They could increase your requisition quotas. I had vineyards. Of my 60 buckets [of grapes], I had to give them 50.[28]

> I also spoke with two people who managed to do some trading during that time. One of them, a horse dealer, said horse-trading helped him preserve his land. The other recalled: "You had to have papers on you that would

show that you had given your quotas, otherwise they confiscated your produce if you got caught. I used to trade my cereals in the mountains. I'd go as far as *Întorsătura Buzăului* and get three bushels of potatoes for a bushel of corn. But I paid in cash for the brandy. I paid 25 *lei* per liter."[29] Several peasants who owned little land before collectivization said that meeting quota requirements at that time was comparable to what they had in the collective: they were left with cereals (or not) depending on the size of the harvest. In a bad year, they were not left with much. In a good year, it was not so bad for them. One respondent mentioned that his requisition quota was 500 kilos of wheat per hectare. The best wheat harvest was about 1,500 kilos per hectare. However, the *chiaburi* who owned a lot of land had much more to complain about:

Interviewee: These requisitions drove me insane. People were deeply in debt. They were left empty-handed. In 1956 I had to buy two bags of wheat for myself, as I didn't have enough for a wedding party in the family.

L.C.: Why were the requisitions instituted?

Interviewee: Because we had to pay war debt to the Russians. You couldn't even weave a blanket, as all your wool went to these requisitions. Nobody gave you any respite; nobody spared you. After I married, I looked for a house so I could move out of my father's house. I left so as to reduce his quotas.

Another respondent told me about a similar strategy of splitting up the household in order to obtain a less exacting requisition plan.

2.3. Persuasion and the creation of collective farms

Whereas the authorities initially put pressure on peasants to meet their quotas, in the late 1950s the pressure shifted toward joining the collective farms. Collectivization occurred in three distinct moments in each of the three villages: first in Rovine (1956–1957), followed by Reviga and Mircea in 1959. The former apparatchik in charge of agriculture declared that three methods had been used to achieve it: socially isolating *chiaburi*, requisitioning produce and confiscating weapons and ammunition from peasants who had fought in World War II or had purchased them later on.

The first two strategies were expected, but the third one was a surprise—confirmed, nonetheless, by other accounts. The activist in charge of agriculture said that the Securitate came and searched through the town hall files covering the 1935–1945 period in order to inventory all those instances in which the "public order" had been disturbed. In those files they found mention of an incident in which my respondent had allegedly fired a rifle in the air. Summoned to the police station, he was urged to confess where he had hidden the rifle. He admitted having used a hunting rifle he had then hidden in the stove at home; the police came and confiscated it. My respondent maintained that "those who refused to turn in

their weapons were beaten up." Taking advantage of this coercive situation, the authorities asked those who owned weapons to join the collective farm. Apparently hundreds of peasants joined the collective farm this way. A former *chiabur* likewise maintained that collectivization had in fact started with the retrieval of weapons from peasants. In his words:

> When the whole thing started, they summoned people to the police station. People tended to throw weapons away or to hide them, unwilling to turn them in. The Party, on the other had, suspected that Romanians didn't want collective farms. So they called on the police. You had to sign a statement that you didn't own a gun. The state was afraid that people would use their pistols when collectivization was to start. If they found a gun in your house, they forced you to join the collective farm. Even if you didn't have a gun, they accused you of having one, in order to nail you.[30]

Most of these weapons were left over from World War II. According to Constantin Iordachi and Dorin Dobrincu (personal communication), many peasants acquired them during the withdrawal of German troops from the USSR, as well as after August 23rd 1944, when German troops abandoned their weapons while retreating to Bulgaria.[31] Trading in armaments was also quite widespread among Soviet soldiers, too, helping to explain why there were people with firearms in Reviga.

Concerning the creation of the collective farm in Rovine, a respondent recalled that two former members of the Iron Guard were part of the new leadership. Another respondent was of the opinion that "initially the poor were attracted to the farm like flies to the light. Most of them were day laborers or servants. It's only later that the better-off peasants joined."[32] This respondent also added that collectivization had been a difficult process, as "people did not easily let go of what they owned." Another respondent, who had been a member of the persuasion teams in Rovine, explained that one of the main strategies consisted of persuading peasants that they would be better off as collective farm members. The persuasion team was typically composed of peasants who had already signed up for GAC membership, with a representative of the town hall and my respondent, representing the Party. According to him, members of these persuasion teams would force their way into people's houses. Another woman contrasted the team's rudeness with the customary practice of stopping at the gate when visiting someone. Faced with these pressures, peasants behaved very passively, rarely listening to what the persuasion teams were saying and continuing with their work. Their passivity can be construed as a form of symbolic resistance.

The Reviga GAC was founded in 1959. According to the former mayor's daughter, the mastermind of the collectivization process was a man named Papainoagă, who also became mayor the same year. She described this man as "my executioner." His chief collaborator was a district representative, whom my respondent characterized as more "humane." Papainoagă brought from Miloşeşti,

a neighboring commune, a team of about twenty men who were especially vulgar, threatening people with violence. Papainoagă wandered from house to house trying to force peasants to join the collective farm with this team of thugs from other communes. Had he rallied his thugs from Rovine, one of my respondents thought, the local peasants would have taken revenge: "People would have caught one of those stupid thugs and beaten them up. In this way, we sent our nincompoops to other villages and they sent theirs to us."[33]

According to a former leader of the Reviga GAC, persuasion work started in the fall of 1959.[34] He claims to have had an untarnished reputation, as he was the offspring of a poor family and had served in the army and in World War II. Therefore, the persuasion commission would not start out unless he was in the team. He confessed that he had personally written the GAC entry petitions of thirty-two peasants. In addition, he volunteered information about how enrollment in the collective farm occurred. In March 1959, the collective boasted 145 families whose land totaled 500 ha. Between March and June of the same year, enrollment tripled; the bulk of peasants joined in 1960. By 1961, most families were enrolled, and by 1962 there were only twenty or twenty-five peasants left unaffiliated with the collective farm. Apparently, families with many children were the first to join.

Why did it take so long for the state to intervene and pressure Reviga to establish a collective farm? In neighboring communes (e.g., Căzăneşti and Cocora), collective farms had been set up ten years earlier, in 1949. In the 1950s, Reviga's former "agriculture agent" said that "there was nobody willing to wage the class struggle" in Reviga.[35] Rather, whoever was politically savvy emphasized persuasion, for the Party's agents had little power in Reviga. The commune Committee was made up of members of the Communist Party and the Ploughmen's Front. Although poor peasants were also part of the Committee, they had no influence whatsoever on the *chiaburi*, nor were they were successful at persuading the poor families to enroll. My interviewee added that enrollment strategies were constantly changing as a function of the decisions made by the district Party committee.

Another interviewee involved in establishing the collective farm maintained that "there were limits to how much the peasants could be persuaded,"[36] offering several insights into why this may have been the case. First, he argued, Reviga was an isolated commune, far from any train station. Another respondent agreed with this, adding that cars were hard to come by at that time.[37] In addition, interviewees noted the absence of strong constraints. By contrast with the commune of Căzăneşti, where many people worked for the government, in Reviga most peasants worked in agriculture. This gave them a certain independence from government pressure. The only direct ways to constrain peasants were to use force, impose quotas, confiscate weapons, and to jeopardize their children's schooling.

Collectivization in Mircea occurred in parallel with that in Reviga and involved the same persuasion teams. After collective farms had been created in the three communes, they were merged in 1964 to cut administrative costs. The persuasion

teams would set people up and blackmail them, or would confiscate their weapons. For instance, one interviewee argued that the teams of thugs from Miloşeşti secretly put coins with King Michael's likeness on his porch, then accused him of "harboring the king in his house"—a charge that represented an additional threat and forced him to join the collective. Another interviewee was beaten up over his unpaid quotas, and then found guilty of hiding wine in his cellar. The mayor admonished him: "You have no other choice but to join the collective farm." A peasant from Mircea had a similar story: he had been summoned by the mayor to haul sand from the Ialomița River, and upon his return, his cart broke down. While he was fixing it with a hammer, the persuasion team and the mayor entered his courtyard. As he hammered on, they urged him to stop, seemingly worried that he would attack them with his hammer. As the peasant refused to obey, they made him go with them to the town hall, for fear he would harm them. Then the man threw the hammer back into his yard. Before turning the corner, the thugs asked him how much land he owned and hastily wrote up his GAC entry petition, which they eventually forced him to sign.[38]

On March 25, 1962, the daughter of the former mayor was among the last peasants still resisting collectivization. Sheer brutality was used in her case:

> When [the mayor] showed up in my yard, I gathered the children around me and I yelled at him: "Get out, you Iron Guard thug!" Papainoagă had been in the Iron Guard, he had paraded the green shirt and had taken the train to Iaşi. He took me to the town hall for what I had said to him. He pushed me, pulled my head kerchief and my hair with it, and tucked it in my mouth to prevent me from screaming. Papainoagă held me by the shoulders, while the president of the collective farm forced my hand to sign the enrollment request. When my sister found out about this, she urged me to sue them. But my mother would not hear of it, as she feared we would all get killed.

3. JOINING THE COLLECTIVE AND METAPHORS OF DISPOSSESSION

The previous section described how collectivization was perceived by those who were supposed to carry it out. In what follows, I will analyze how peasants reacted to collectivization and how they coped with the pressure. Why did some of them join the collective farm, while others did their best to postpone doing so? How did they experience the change? I will first describe what my respondents today describe having felt and thought when they were urged to enroll, namely a mix of fear, uncertainty and, for some, anticipated benefits. The process through which their land and goods were being taken away involved more than just economic consequences. Equally important was how they perceived changes in family, household, community and kinship.

3.1. Benefits, fear and resignation

In addition to the fact that the first to enroll in the GAC were the village poor, several sources agreed that in exchange for joining, peasants used to receive cheese, onions, oil and even olives, all of which were hard to come by in Reviga. One interviewee made an analogy between giving away produce to attract peasants into the GAC and "luring the sheep with corn."[39] Most of my interviewees shared the same opinion. Perhaps a certain degree of contagion operated as well. One of the interviewees said that, as a member of the Communist Party, he had first enrolled his father with 2.5 ha of land and a horse, while he himself worked the family's two remaining hectares. However, after seeing that not only was his father exempt from taxes, but he also received cheese and wheat, the man decided to give the horse and the remaining land to the collective farm.[40]

Fear of violence was another reason peasants enrolled. According to an interviewee, "the poor preferred to sign the enrollment request rather than to be taken to the town hall and beaten up."[41] Another interviewee noted that the strategies of persuasion changed over time: "In the beginning, there were seven or eight men in a team. They used to come to me and say: 'Hey Dumitre! Sign up!'—they would ask very nicely. Later on, strangers from other villages came and surrounded you. At that point, I gave up and joined."[42] Another respondent's father urged him to join the collective for fear that he might be beaten. Several interviewees argued that peasants refrained from enrolling because they did not know what life would look like afterwards. Yet another respondent said: "Those in charge of collectivizing were very determined. People were afraid of them. It was like a general mobilization was decreed. Nobody knew what would happen to us. We thought that we were doomed."[43]

3.2. Strategies of resistance and of coping with dispossession

Another strategy to cope with the pressure was simply to acknowledge that joining the GAC was inevitable. According to two respondents, they became resigned to the idea when they learned that all the peasants in other villages had joined. After hearing about the persuasion activities in Ciochina and Miloşeşti in 1958–1959, one of them started to believe what the persuasion teams were right when they said: "Can't you see that this is the way forward?" A woman who was sick at that time and was hospitalized in Bucharest was an interesting case in this regard. While in the hospital, she overheard mobilizing anthems on the radio: "When I saw what was going on in Bucharest, it all became clear to me. When I returned to my house, I said to my husband: "What shall we do, shall we sign up? In Bucharest they're singing to the Party."[44] Discussions with relatives might lead to enrolling in the collective farm. One respondent recalled that "relatives used to tell you: can't you see this is the only way to go?"[45] Here is how one woman described the moment when the collectivization teams showed up: "Nobody knew what was going on, or what they would do to us. My father said that there was nothing we could do about it, we had to give in."[46]

Minimizing loss was the main strategy for resisting pressure to join. Frequently, before joining the collective, people sold their cart and horse, particularly if these were of good quality, and bought others of lesser quality. They would thus gain some money in the process. One of the interviewees declared:

> D.U.: When I joined, I bought another cart, mine was too new for that. I sold that one in Padina. As for the horse, I sold it in Urziceni.
> L.C.: Did anybody say anything to you about that?
> D.U.: I sold them because I needed the money. But people would often betray you.[47]

In addition to selling their property, people would also hide their farming tools. An interviewee revealed that one of his acquaintances kept his cart hidden in the attic. He removed the wheels, put them aside, and joined the collective farm with an older cart. I learned of two families who did something similar in Mircea. The same stories circulated about plows and weeding machines. One respondent had hidden them away, awaiting the moment when the Americans would come and save him, but this illusion was shattered by the reverberations of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In Reviga there were no open conflicts or confrontations with the persuasion teams. Only one story, told by an official, had it that during a gathering in Rovine, people threatened to kill the Party activist. This official explained that peasants had been seething with discontent because they had not enough to eat and that he had to save the Party activist from their fury.[48]

In conclusion, the interaction between state agents and peasants consisted of avoidance and harassment strategies. Harassing the *chiaburi* was one of them, and similar strategies were used regarding enrollment in the collective farm. One interviewee's neighbor was caught and taken to Mircea after he refused to join. He was locked up, but was able to escape by breaking down the wall. Another peasant hid in the attic and peeped through a hole at the persuasion teams, waiting there until the teams grew bored and left.[49] Yet another peasant stayed hidden in his attic for two months.

Another strategy of passive resistance consisted of postponing enrollment by engaging authorities in protracted negotiations (see also Lățea, this volume). Because I came across only one such case, I cannot assess how widespread this strategy was. An interviewee reported the following:

> J.L.: They beat me up to join. I was sitting on the bench by the gate. "Join the collective!" they would say. I swore at them. "I won't," I replied. There were teams of thirty or forty guys. They would surround you and beat you up. I ran away, but R., the district president, caught me and took me to the Community Center. "Why won't you sign up?" he asked. "Because I have five acres of wheat… let me reap it and then I'll sign up." He beat me up on the manure pile. Seven to ten guys would surround you and keep beat-

> ing you. Then they turned me over to the district president.[50] The guys were from Căzăneşti.
> L.C.: Did you know them?
> J.L.: Yes, they were cowherds and shepherds. "I have five hectares, let me keep them and I'll sign up," I'd say. My house wasn't finished yet. That evening the police paid a visit, and I threw a party to get out of it.[51]

Peasants frequently described enrollment as a painful process of "giving away." An interviewee said: "I cried, it was heartbreaking when I had to give away the horses and the cart. It made no sense to give away the horses gratis. The cart was new. The horses were about four years old, and the mare was even younger. I paid them no more attention. It was very difficult and painful."[52] Several other peasants expressed sorrow at losing their horses: "My father didn't really want to sign up. They took his horses away, and then he was really upset. It was as if they had cut off his hands. He cared a lot about his horses."[53] Another peasant recalled: "After I signed up, they took away my nine year-old horse. He was like our son, we had him since he was a colt."[54] Another peasant provided a very interesting description: "I had to give up our cart and horse. Three years earlier we'd sold vegetables and a pig so we could buy that cart. Then we had to give ourselves up to the collective farm. We too had to go. They took away the land from under our feet."[55] Yet another interesting image was that "Ceauşescu came and gathered up all the land."[56]

4. EARLY STRUCTURE OF THE COLLECTIVE FARM AND PERCEPTIONS OF WORK IN THE COLLECTIVE DURING ITS EARLY DAYS

According to an interviewee who had been involved in the persuasion teams and the leadership of the collective farm, chaos reigned in the GAC during the first years of its existence. He was in charge of organizing the farm, and was influenced in this respect by a booklet the Party distributed entitled "The Establishment of the Lenau Collective Farm in Banat." In the beginning he merely amassed everything the new members brought to the farm:

> People had to bring in their horses and carts. We gathered them in the yard of the farm, registered them and guarded them. In the beginning we used to assign them to their former owners for work. A cart driver had six workloads a month. It was hard, in the beginning, because I didn't know much about this. Nobody kept accurate records of people's work time. A year-and-a-half later, I became a team supervisor.[57]

At first, the farm did not receive much external support, so the land was tilled with horses, carts and harrows. It was with these primitive means that wheat was sown between 1959 and 1961. The Andrăşeşti Machine and Tractor Station (known as S.M.T., see the Glossary of Terms) served twenty communes and had a branch in Reviga. The SMT had caterpillar tractors of the KDP and IAR types, but never managed to do the work on time. In the beginning, the GAC used both tractors and horses. Later on, the peasants' horses were killed and used to feed the pigs in the Căzăneşti pig farm.

Several peasants said that getting used to the idea that the land was no longer theirs wasn't easy, but they subsequently grew fond of the collective farm (a sentiment perhaps stronger in recollections after 1989). A few interviewees declared that they wished the collective farm had not been dismantled, because, as I learned from a former farm chairman, peasants were paid 20 lei during the thriving 1960s, and also received 2 kg of wheat and 2.5 kg of corn. People worked an average of 400 work points per person, and therefore poor peasants had an opportunity to become richer. Early on, peasants received their produce in the fall, and during the year if they needed it.

Why were the peasants interviewed were so proud of the GAC? One possible explanation is their feeling that they witnessed the growth and development of agriculture in their village, rather than a betterment of their personal situation. Several peasants liked the new vegetable plots inaugurated in 1959 along the riverbanks, where they could grow onions, peppers, and tomatoes. In 1960, the GAC built large stables for cattle. Livestock was purchased on state credit, and the year 1987 saw the creation of large chicken and pig farms in Reviga.

Orchards and vegetable plots were also new to the community.[58] Sugar beets, tobacco and vineyards had been cultivated before collectivization, and they remained central to planning in the collective farm as well. A former president recalled that the agricultural plan for the commune included a diverse range of products, such as eggs, cheese, cherries, nuts and frogs (the commune owned a small pond). In exchange, peasants received sheet iron, clothes and other goods. The early period was also interesting because the labor supply was plentiful, but by the late 1980s, there were only four work teams left of the initial seven. It is possible that, in the beginning, peasants felt freer because they could steal more from the GAC. A few years later, planning was improved and security over GAC property was tightened.

How did perceptions of work change after collectivization? Most of the peasants I talked to thought that working on the collective farm had been more intense because it implied daily effort, dawn to dusk. Women were overburdened, with their double workload in the farm and in the household. This is how a woman described her life at that time: "I used to work every day in the collective farm. I worked from dawn until noon, then I had lunch, then I continued to work in the evening. I used Sunday for cleaning the house. In the morning or at night I did laundry. I did my cooking at night."[59] Also, peasants worked in the collective farm throughout the year, by contrast with the seasonal character of work before col-

lectivization. The territory of the village was divided up into zones, and peasants had a certain workload assigned to them every night. The equipment manager had to go every morning to get the horses and carts from the farm, as he was not allowed to keep them at home. Nor was he allowed to come home during the day, although some peasants were occasionally granted such permission. Some sectors of activity were harder than others—for instance, animal husbandry was the most difficult sector, because work started at five o'clock in the morning, no matter the season. Women were over-represented in some sectors, such as the work on sugar beet and cotton cultivation.

Several interviewees argued that their lifestyles had been more flexible before collectivization: "People used to do what they pleased, as they had their own land and plow. They weren't used to taking orders. You could work today and feast tomorrow. There used to be many fewer days of full work in a year [before collectivization]."[60] Typical tasks in the GAC consisted of sowing, weeding, threshing and harvesting. Work in the fall season ended with the corn stalks being brought home as food for livestock. Another marked difference from before was work in teams, or in "piles" (*la grămadă*). This contrasted sharply with the pre-collectivization years, when families did their farm work on their own, or with a couple of others. A peasant expressed his satisfaction with teamwork: "You didn't even notice how fast time went by during the day. As a private farmer, it was just me and my woman working together."[61] Yet others expressed their disappointment: "In a team, you couldn't know how others were doing their job. I weeded the corn thoroughly, but I wasn't sure if the person who did the second weeding was doing it well."[62] However, an advantage of working in teams was that peasants could cover up for one another.

The GAC was also responsible for other transformations. One such transformation was in the heating of homes, which had traditionally been done by burning corn stalks and cobs in ceramic stoves. After collectivization, the GAC used stalks and cobs for making fertilizer, and peasants switched to heating with wood. Finally, there were changes in the way in which people spent time with their family: beforehand, people worked together with family members, but now men and women had different work schedules that left less time for the family. As a result, the small round tables around which people had eaten together gradually disappeared, as different schedules meant that family members had less frequent meals together.

Collectivization also changed the geography of kinship, particularly in the village of Mircea, where peasants had preserved kinship ties with their home regions. For the generation that was then aged 50–60, collectivization meant a renewal of kinship ties in their home regions. By contrast, for the generation who had recently married, collectivization meant "settling down" in Mircea. Change in ownership patterns was also combined with change in work schedules. Seasonal work became daily work done around the year. Women came to bear the heavy burden of collectivization, as their workload in the collective farm increased alongside that in their households. The organization of work changed as well.

Whereas before collectivization the units in which people worked overlapped with their households, in the GAC they worked in close proximity in heterogeneous teams the farm managers created for them.

5. CONCLUSIONS: EXTERNAL PRESSURE AND CULTURAL CHANGE

My findings do not permit unequivocal conclusions to my initial question—whether peasants had a more intense relationship with their land as a function of the number of generations they had owned it. I cannot convincingly argue that peasants gave away their land easily because they were recent colonists in the Bărăgan region. On the one hand, some peasants from Mircea returned to their home villages after collectivization and gave up on their "life in the plains," as they used to call it. On the other hand, there were peasants from Mircea who had received land barely twenty years earlier and who expressed deep regrets about having to give up their land, going so far as to identify themselves and the land they had lost as one indivisible being.

Aside from the harassment of *chiaburi* by officials from the commune (the mayor's office, the police) and the district (Securitate), as one respondent put it, in Reviga "there was nobody to wage the 'class struggle.'" This means that for the work of collectivization, the Party could count on only a handful of people who were not wholly reliable. Those most directly involved in collectivization (the mayor, two men from Rovine, and another two from Mircea) had been members of the Iron Guard. As long as there was no external pressure, the local base of these power structures was weak. Constraints on the population included blackmailing those who owned weapons, threatening the education of people's children, violence, and material benefits for poorer families. Collectivization took less than two years to accomplish and was based more on the deployment of coercion than on "persuasion."

Resistance to collectivization manifested itself as a combination of uncertainty about the future and a desire to preserve a meager family patrimony. Peasants expressed sorrow at losing their horses (which one person described as like losing a son and another as like having his hands cut off), the independence they had as private farmers ("they took the land from under our feet," "after giving away the land, we went too"), and at having to give away their belongings "for nothing." In my view, this feeling of futility is clearly visible by their frequent use of the verb "to give [up or away]" when talking about the experience of joining the GAC, a usage that reflects losing the power that the family patrimony had conferred. "Donating" to the collective farm, then, came to signify frailty and instability, which express the feeling of having lost the capacity to decide one's own fate.

Translated from Romanian by Cornel Ban and Katherine Verdery

NOTES

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1 James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
2 The archives of the commune of Reviga document poorly the 1945–1960 period. They contain a few identical, hand-written requests to join the GAC. The other documents were issued by the town hall and are unrelated to collectivization.
3 From my observations, "cowherd" carries a local pejorative meaning and does not refer to a profession, but rather to moral insufficiency. Several other subjects used this term to label the activists responsible for "persuasion."
4 C.M, 77 years old, female, farmer, middle peasant, fall 2002.
5 Karl Kautsky, *The Agrarian Question* (London: Zwan Publications, 1988).
6 C.D., 81 years old, woman, farmer, *kulak*, the step-daughter of the mayor before 1948, fall 2002.
7 T.B., 70 years old, male, Roma, no land, day worker, father was in metal work.
8 C.D., fall 2002.
9 V.I., 73 years old, male, Roma, farmer without land, day worker, father was a blacksmith.
10 C.D., fall 2002.
11 I interviewed this man. He avoided talking about the post-war period by simply saying "it wasn't bad at that time." He mentioned nothing about the former Iron Guard members.
12 E.A., 89 years old, female, school teacher, *chiabur*, fall 2002.
13 This piece of information is confirmed by other sources too. See Gheorghe Crişan, *Piramida puterii. Oameni politici şi de stat în România* (Bucharest: Pro Historia. 2004), 186. I thank Dorin Dobrincu for this source.
14 The town hall of Reviga, The Agriculture Bureau.
15 Whether there were children and of what ages was relevant to *chiabur* status because a family with small children could not yet use their labor and would have to hire some at peak times.
16 N.T., 92 years old, man, vocational school in Bucharest, *kulak*, fall 2002. He stressed his point by saying the following: "I have studied geometry since I was in the third grade, my dear fellow!"
17 List of *chiaburi* in Reviga. The town hall of Reviga, The Agriculture Bureau.
18 When the man told me this story, he started to cry.
19 The woman told me that the agent in charge of agricultural matters in the 1950s forced three people to file complaints against the schoolteacher. On the other hand, other peasants said the schoolteacher was a wicked man, so the complaints may have been justified.
20 N.C., 89 years old, male, farmer, *chiabur*, fall 2002. He was drafted in the army and worked in a uranium mine because he was a *chiabur*. He declared that he had made good money there.

21 Housing the party inspectors represented another form of imposition.
22 V.S., 71 years old, male, farmer, middle-peasant, former president of the collective farm, fall 2002.
23 I could not confirm this with certainty.
24 N.B., 85 years old, male, poor peasant, president of the collective farm, fall 2002.
25 T.T., 82 years old, male, middle-peasant, farmer and innkeeper, fall 2002.
26 M.N., 89 years old, male, middle-peasant, farmer, fall 2002.
27 J.B., 88 years ol, male, farmer, *chiabur*.
28 N.C., fall 2002.
29 V.P., 78 years old, male, farmer and former horse trader, fall 2002.
30 N.C., fall 2002.
31 I thank Constantin Iordachi and Dorin Dobrincu for this piece of information.
32 G.V., 76 years old, male, poor peasant, fall 2002.
33 T.T., fall 2002.
34 B.D., 82 years old, male, poor peasant, fall 2002.
35 This refers to "persuasion," not to social relations.
36 V.O., 79 years old, man, middle-peasant, farmer, member of the persuasion teams in Rovine, fall 2002.
37 V.S., fall 2002.
38 M.A., 78 years old, man, farmer, middle-peasant, fall 2002.
39 O.F., 78 years old, man, farmer, middle-peasant, fall 2002.
40 This is how other peasants described the same phenomenon: "In the beginning, we used to receive cereals, cheese, potatoes. You were ashamed to go to your family empty-handed when those who were part of the collective farm went home with biscuits and pound cake." "In the beginning, after signing up, you would join in persuading other peasants that life was good in the collective farm. Other peasants could clearly see how much we received from the farm, but used to say that they would join later, perhaps the following year." "In the beginning, the state provided for their needs. Poor sods! They looked at the corn the state gave them and thought that they saw a wonder."
41 V.S., fall 2002.
42 D.U., 82 years old, man, middle-peasant, fall 2002.
43 T.M., fall 2002.
44 T.M., fall 2002.
45 Most interviewees confirmed that the decision to sign up was usually made by the close members of the family. One of them said that there could not have been otherwise: "Who else knew your situation better?"
46 T.M., fall 2002.
47 D.U., fall 2002.
48 V.O., fall 2002.
49 C.G., 80 years old, male, farmer, middle-peasant, fall 2002.
50 The wife of the interviewee told me that the district president was a good man because he allowed them to keep their land until harvest time.
51 J.L., 87 years old, male, farmer, middle-peasant.
52 C.N., 80 years old, male, farmer, poor peasant, party member since 1950.
53 V.P.R., 76 years old, female, her father had been a middle-peasant, fall 2002.
54 M.A., fall 2002.

55 C.N., 80 years old, man, farmer, poor, party member since 1950, fall 2002.
56 The communist period starting in 1965 was called "Ceauşescu's time." With one exception, I did not hear any reference to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej or Petru Groza.
57 B.D., fall 2002.
58 Fruit orchards were created as part of collective farms mostly in the plains.
59 V.P.R., 76 years old, woman, her father had been a middle peasant, fall 2002.
60 V.P., fall 2002.
61 J.L., fall 2002.
62 V.S., fall 2002.

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E.A., 89 years old, woman, school teacher, *chiabur.*
G.V., 76 years old, male, poor peasant.
J.B., 88 years old, male, farmer, *chiabur.*
J.L., 87 years old, male, farmer, middle-peasant.
M.A., 78 years old, male, farmer, middle-peasant.
M.N., 89 years old, male, middle-peasant, farmer.
N.C., 89 years old, male, farmer, *chiabur.*
N.T., 92 years old, male, vocational school in Bucharest, *chiabur.*
O.F., 78 years old, male, farmer, middle-peasant.
N.B., 85 years old, male, poor peasant, president of the collective farm.
T.B., 70 years old, male, Roma, fiddler, barber, no land.
T.M., 79 years old, woman, farmer, poor.
T.T., 82 years old, male, middle-peasant, farmer and innkeeper.
V.I., 73 years old, male, Roma, farmer without land, day worker, his father had been a blacksmith.
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One Step Back, Two Steps Forward: Institutionalizing the Party-State and Collective Property in Two Romanian Villages (Galați Region)

CĂTĂLIN AUGUSTIN STOICA

During the second half of 1957, despite the violent methods employed by the so-called "persuasion" (or collectivization) teams, which mainly consisted of industrial workers and Party activists, collectivization in the Galați region met strong peasant resistance. In this region, peasants took control of the mayor's office in several villages (Suraia, Răstoacă, Boțârlău) and burned their petitions to join the collective farms. The police stepped in and made arrests. On December 1, 1957, locals from the neighboring village of Vadu Roşca blocked the visit of a persuasion team to their village. Two days later, the regional authorities and the President of the People's Council (the mayor of Vulturul commune) resumed their efforts to enter Vadu Roşca. Villagers opposed their visit and tried to sequester the mayor and the district's representative. A few hours later, the mayor and the district's representative managed to strike a deal with the locals: the team was set free on the condition that the authorities would return the next day for negotiations. While locals were being reassured that collectivization would not be carried out by force, the Securitate (Secret Police) troops surrounded the village, cut it off from the rest of the commune, and declared a state of emergency.

At about 9 AM on December 4, 1957, after a verbal altercation between villagers and authorities, the Securitate troops fired upon the peasants gathered in the center of the village. The attack left nine dead and about sixty wounded; numerous others were arrested. The then-young Nicolae Ceauşescu was sent to coordinate pacification of the village.[1] Ceauşescu first dissolved the local chapter of the Communist Party, which had eleven members. According to an eyewitness,[2] Ceauşescu's words were: "You, as Party members, did nothing but hide under the bed! Eleven individuals with eleven bludgeons could have easily controlled this village of reactionaries! I hereby dissolve the local Party chapter!" Eventually, eighteen locals were tried and sentenced to prison for their involvement in the revolt, and the collectivization of the village came to a halt until 1960.

Following the rebellion in Vadu Roşca, petitions to join the collective farms were returned to peasants in some neighboring villages. In the spring of 1958, Ceauşescu personally came to one such village (i.e., Năneşti) and agreed to cancel these petitions, acknowledging that many peasants had been forced to sign

them. According to an eyewitness, Ceauşescu's words were: "Today we will take one step back in the process of collectivization. We will do this only to make two steps forwards tomorrow. We will return your petitions, but, later on, you'll beg us to join the collective farm! We will crush with an iron fist all those who oppose collectivization!"[3] In Vadu Roşca, post-rebellion collectivization was resumed in 1960 and was accomplished without major incidents or drawbacks.

The above paragraphs synthesize the story of collectivization in Vadu Roşca, where, by contrast with Năneşti, resistance to collectivization and the ensuing reprisals took extreme forms. In this study I start from these two tragic cases and analyze the issue of collectivization in relation to the construction of the Party-State in Romania. Drawing on lessons from sociological neoinstitutionalism, I maintain that the post-1945 changes in Romania were profoundly marked by the decoupling of the new institutional forms and the practices adopted for implementing them.[4] The consequences of this decoupling were dramatic: they led to the delegitimation of new property forms (i.e., collective farms), and ultimately undermined the flimsy authority of the new power. In Vadu Roşca, the peasants' rebellion of December 1957 clearly indicates that the communist regime and the new property forms lacked legitimacy. In Năneşti, the crackdown on the peasant rebellion in Vadu Roşca tempered any protest against collectivization. However, as I will discuss in this chapter, in both villages the communist regime and collective property were perceived as illegitimate *throughout the communist era*. I will illustrate these issues through interviews with participants in the 1957 rebellion, other ordinary peasants, and former local authorities from both Vadu Roşca and Năneşti.[5]

This chapter is organized as follows: In the first part, I will briefly describe the two villages under investigation. In the second part, I will analyze collectivization policies as they relate to creating the Party-State. In the third part, I will discuss the institutionalization of new property forms, and in the last, I will summarize and discuss my main findings.

1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF VADU ROŞCA AND NĂNEŞTI VILLAGES

The village of Vadu Roşca is now part of Vulturul commune (which is currently contained in Vrancea county). It is situated about twenty kilometers from the town of Focşani and about fifty kilometers from the town of Galați. Located in the northern part of the commune, Vadu Roşca lies about two kilometers from the commune center (the village of Vulturul), and between two rivers, the Putna and the Siret. Vadu Roşca was first mentioned in archives around 1500 AD; its name seems to come from a certain Roşca, who owned a bridge over the Siret river. To this day, the village is relatively isolated. Despite the new bridges over the Putna river, the road that connects Vadu Roşca to the center of the commune is in bad condition and becomes even more precarious when it rains. [6]

In the early 1950s, the village numbered around four hundred families. In terms of its ethnic composition, it was relatively homogeneous: nearly all Romanian, with only four Roma families. All villagers were of the Eastern Orthodox religion. Before collectivization, they worked in agriculture, growing corn and wheat, and making wine. Many were also involved in manufacturing and trading baskets, rugs, and other reed-made products. This craftsmanship apparently distinguished Vadu Roşca from neighboring villages, which relied almost exclusively on agriculture.

According to a former school teacher in the village, the degree of social inequality based on land ownership was rather low, as land was fairly equally divided among villagers. Most people were "middle peasants" (*mijlocaşi*) and they owned 3 to 5 ha of land on average. Other interviewees declared that most people in Vadu Roşca, particularly after World War II, were poor, owning less than 3 ha of land. There were also a few rich peasants, who owned more than 7 ha of land. However, at the end of the war, Vadu Roşca had no *boyars* (or large landowners), and there was only one person who owned as much as 10 ha of land. As collectivization began, this person was listed for a short while as a *chiabur*, but was subsequently removed from the list. "There was nobody in the village who was very rich."[7] Regardless of whether people in Vadu Roşca saw themselves as "middle" or "poor" peasants, the differences among them were fairly minimal.

The village of Năneşti is situated near the banks of the Siret River, forty kilometers away from the cities of Galați and Focşani. The village is also the center of the commune of Năneşti, which includes two other villages (Călienii Noi and Călienii Vechi). Over two centuries old, Năneşti seemingly draws its name from its founder, a certain Nănescu. According to the 1948 Census, Năneşti had at that time 1,417 inhabitants. There were only four or five families of Roma; seven or eight families were affiliated with "The Lord's Army" [*Oastea Domnului*], an Evangelical movement founded by a certain father Iosif Trifa within the Romanian Greek Orthodox Church during the interwar period.[8] All other villagers in Năneşti were Greek-Orthodox. Most families fell into the category of middle peasants, and overall, social inequality based on land ownership was more pronounced than in Vadu Roşca. Specifically, eight families from Năneşti owned more than 10 ha of land each; at least four of the heads of these families were listed as *chiaburi* during collectivization.

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PARTY-STATE

2.1. Post-1945 institutional change and decoupling processes

In this study I employ the theoretical frameworks of sociological neoinstitutionalism.[9] Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell distinguish among three forms of isomorphic institutional change: "1) *coercive isomorphism* that stems from political influence and the problem of legitimacy; 2) *mimetic isomorphism* resulting from standard responses to uncertainty; and 3) *normative isomorphism*, associated with

professionalization."[10] DiMaggio and Powell stress that these three labels have an analytical purpose and that, in empirical settings, they are not always distinct. W.R. Scott further distinguishes between *coercive change* induced by means of *legitimate authority* and *coercive change* induced by means of *coercive power* (which may be perceived as illegitimate).[11]

This latter subtype, I contend, characterizes the transformations that occurred in Central and Eastern Europe after 1945: a coercive change induced by an authority (i.e., the Soviet Union and its few local fellow travelers) perceived as illegitimate. Romanian communists (among others) faced serious legitimacy problems dating back to the interwar period. Prior to World War II, Romania was a country with an undeveloped industry and a large agricultural sector. Industrial workers, likely supporters of the Communist Party, represented a meager 10 percent of Romania's active population.[12] Moreover, Romanian communists were disliked domestically because "[their] party championed ideas and slogans with minimal appeal to the class it claimed to represent, portraying Romania as a 'multinational imperialist country' and advocating the dismemberment of the Romanian nation-state brought into being by the Versailles and Trianon treaties of 1919–1920."[13] Consequently, for most of the interwar period and during the Second World War, Romanian authorities banned the Communist Party, imprisoning many of its leaders, while others sought refuge in the Soviet Union.

On August 23, 1944, near the end of the Second World War, Romania—until then allied with Hitler—switched allegiance, and a pro-Allied government took power in Romania. At that time, Romanian communists were a minuscule, negligible political force: "there were only 80 [Party] members in Bucharest, and fewer than 1,000 throughout the country, including those in prisons and concentration camps… Proportionally, the Romanian Communist Party was thus the smallest communist party in Eastern Europe. In absolute terms, it equaled the membership of the Albanian communist party."[14] Yet at Stalin's insistence, Romanian communists were given a central role in the post-1945 government.[15]

Undoubtedly, the nature of the post-1945 transformations can also be described as *mimetic institutional change*. Many institutional and organizational forms adopted by local communists were copies of those provided by the Soviet Union, a pattern Kenneth Jowitt refers to as the *emulation* of Soviet organizational forms by Romanian communists (among others).[16] In contrast to Jowitt, I deem organizational emulation a *predictable* and *inevitable* effect of coercive institutional change.

Thus far, my argument has referred to the general frameworks relevant to the construction of the Party-State in post-1945 Romania, and I have described these general frameworks as coercive and mimetic institutional change. At the same time, I maintain that all types of institutional change are accompanied by different degrees of decoupling between, on the one hand, the new institutional *forms* that have been adopted and, on the other, the *practices* existing prior to the adoption of these new forms, along with the strategies for implementing the new insti-

tutional models.[17] Although neoinstitutionalism has paid only scant attention to the decoupling between new institutional forms and practices, Clemens and Cook insist on the importance of studying such decoupling mechanisms—especially when institutional change has unintended consequences contrary to the anticipated goals.[18] Against this background, I distinguish analytically among three levels at which institutional decoupling took place.

First, decoupling occurred at the level of the Soviet and domestic elites. Despite immense pressure from the Soviet Union, some Eastern European communist elites opposed the uncritical adoption of Soviet blueprints, and this led to substantial variation in institutional forms within the communist bloc. For instance, in Poland the Catholic Church maintained a considerable degree of autonomy; also, unlike other "sister" regimes, a significant part of Polish agriculture remained in private hands. The former Yugoslavia under Tito—whom Stalin deemed a heretic–clearly illustrates the institutional differences among countries from the former communist camp.

Furthermore, although Hungary and Poland along with other countries bowed to Soviet pressure and adopted *statist* forms of organization during communism, they differed in regard to their societal organization (for instance, the extent to which the legitimate social actors are thought to be autonomous *individuals* or more *corporate* actors).[19] With its relatively autonomous Catholic Church and its Solidarity trade union, Polish civil society was rather "corporatist" in its organization. Ivan Szelényi elegantly summarizes such institutional differences in the organization of society as follows: "[whereas] Hungarians [from 1970 to 1980] sought to expand their autonomy from the socialist state by means of the second economy (thus following an *individualistic* strategy), the Poles challenged the power structure directly in the political sphere, through *trade unions* […], *political organizations* and *collective action*."[20] As some scholars suggest, such institutional differences undermined the communist regimes in Hungary and Poland and eventually contributed to their collapse.[21]

Domestic communist elites represent the second level at which we see the decoupling between new institutional forms and practices, with significant consequences for constructing the socialist system in Romania. I have in mind here the internal struggles between "orthodox Stalinists" and "reformists," or between "Muscovites" and "national" elites.[22] In the Romanian case, Robert Levy shows that major disagreements and struggles within the top levels of the communist elite influenced both the pace and the character of collectivization.[23]

The decoupling between new institutional forms and practices can also be analyzed at a third level, that is, the dynamic interaction between central elites and local decision-makers. On the one hand, the center (i.e., central government and Communist Party elites) repeatedly sought to "standardize" the process of transforming agriculture and of imposing these standards on counties and localities. On the other hand, local elites were the ones to determine how these standards and policies were implemented. At times, the center was dissatisfied with

the obtuseness and "Stakhanovism" of local elites, especially when they classified numerous middle peasants as *chiaburi* (rich peasants), which could fuel discontent among the majority of peasants.

In other cases, local complicities—whether based on kinship ties or on self-interest—undermined the center's intentions and policies to a considerable degree. I cannot rule out that some "enlightened" local elites tried to look after the interests of their communities and to temper the excesses of the center's policies. We might also use the hypothesis of a *weak state* that was highly dependent on the actions of lower level officials to explain the decoupling between the institutional forms adopted and promoted by the center and the local practices of collectivization.[24]

Before continuing, I should note that the levels I have distinguished are analytic in character. In reality, however, the decouplings between formal structures and practices at different levels (and the institutional effects of these decouplings) were tightly intertwined. For instance, in the early 1950s, disagreements between Bucharest and Moscow translated into fierce struggles among various factions within the Romanian communist elite. These struggles further reverberated at lower levels throughout the country as each political patron from Bucharest had clients at the regional, county, and village levels. (I will further discuss these issues in the following sections.)

2.2. The legitimacy and institutionalization of new property forms

My previous discussion suggested that the communist regime's lack of legitimacy was a key obstacle to imposing the Soviet model in Romania (among other countries). In the case of collectivization, the problem of legitimacy boiled down to the following question: "*Who* will carry out the collectivization of agriculture in this country and *how*?" In theory, there were three possible answers: 1) to rely exclusively on Party members in each village to do the work; 2) to bring in activists and Party members from other regions; and 3) to co-opt highly respected people from local communities into the collective farms (and the Communist Party). In the two villages discussed in this chapter, all three solutions were tested and implemented in various combinations.

Relying exclusively on local Party members to carry out collectivization was not feasible because their number in the two villages was too small. Specifically, in Vadu Roşca, with its roughly four hundred families, the local chapter of the Party had only eleven members. In Năneşti, which had 1,417 inhabitants, there were only sixteen Party members. Moreover, some local activists and members were perceived as disreputable characters: "Who do you think joined the Party first? Well, it was the tractorists, the drunkards, and the Gypsies! These were the ones who built the Party in the commune!"[25] Or, "The guy who attacked the car [of Party Secretary Vasile Marin] with a knife was a Party member too. Vasile Marin yelled at him: 'Get out of my way, comrade! I represent the Party!' The other fellow replied: 'You? You represent the Party? Well, so do I.' You see, he was

a Party member too… And he kept chasing and hitting the Party Secretary's car with his knife…! Imagine! Him, the Party!"[26] Another interviewee confirmed this incident: "Indeed, there were only eleven Party members in Vadu Roşca. Some of them were miserable types. The guy who attacked the Party secretary's car was one of them; he was a Party member but he couldn't even read the name of his village on the welcome sign at the entrance to Vadu Roşca! He was illiterate, can you believe it? Illiterate!"[27] Similarly, in Năneşti "only the wickedest people were the first to join the party!"[28]

Exceptions to this rule of "drunkards and miserable types" have to be acknowledged as well. According to my interviewees, some local Party members did have a good reputation. Such was the case of "Gică 'The Communist'" from Năneşti. One of my respondents recalled:

> This fellow, Gică… he was a good man. He truly believed in what he was doing and wasn't a bad fellow at all. The poor guy, he didn't gain much from being a Party member. Look at what he owns now—only a studio apartment in [the town of] Brăila and this shack in the village. That's all! As for other Party members… Well, others pilfered everything they could lay their hands on! And they built houses for themselves and their children, and kept a close watch on the rest of us![29]

Besides Gică, the former mayor of Vulturul commune also does not seem to fit the popular perception according to which, in the early 1950s, Party members were mainly recruited from among shady characters. In his own words,

> My father was a member of the National Peasants' Party but when the members of this party ordered the government troops to fire upon [striking] workers at Lupeni and Grivița, my father became fed up with them. On March 6, 1945, he was admitted into the Communist Party and was appointed mayor of this village. Afterwards, but still in 1945, my father was summoned to a Party meeting in Focşani. Some Russians attended and they told the people in the room "How many *boyars* [large landowners] do you have in your villages? Look, here's a box full of grenades. Take them and throw them through the windows of the *boyars* who exploited you!" One of the Russians had a pistol in his hand and it went off in the air, and my father had a nervous shock; he couldn't get over it and retired from politics. Then in 1956, Party people came to me and asked me to join the Party. At first, I refused them because on her deathbed my mother had me swear that I wouldn't become involved in politics. Three days later—after Party people more or less threatened me [saying that] I wouldn't have an easy life if I refused them—I decided to join the Party. […] I was appointed mayor […] The agriculture in this country was really backward. If you wanted to increase production and feed people, you couldn't work the land individu-

> ally, with horses and inadequate machinery, like in the past. Inequalities among people were huge. Plus, there was an economic crisis after the [Second World] War and we had to repay the war debts to the Russians. Such were the times.[30]

As I mentioned previously, Ceauşescu personally dissolved the local Party chapter after the rebellion in Vadu Roşca. According to an eyewitness to the meeting between Ceauşescu and local Party members, the former blamed the latter for their lack of vigilance and for making a pact with the "enemy": "What did you do to prevent this rebellion from happening? You only splashed mud in your country's face! What kind of Party members are you? Surrender your Party membership cards right now!"[31]

According to the former director of the school and the Party Secretary in Vadu Roşca, the communist regime continued to be suspicious of the local Party chapter even two decades after the rebellion. Membership remained small throughout the 1970s and 1980s because "the village meant trouble [with reference to the 1957 uprising]." Background checks for Vadu Roşca villagers who applied for Party membership were much more rigorous than for anybody else in the commune of Vulturul. Such background checks aimed to find an applicant's possible kinshipties to participants in the 1957 rebellion; having such ties was sufficient for rejection of a candidate's application for Party membership.

My interviews suggest that the most frequently used strategy in collectivization here (as well as elsewhere; see other papers in this volume) was to rely on activists and Party members from other regions. According to my respondents, the top (regional) level included largely (if not exclusively) activists came from other regions. The low number of trustworthy Party activists at the national level in the 1950s may explain this pattern, for the shortage of activists made it necessary to rotate them among various localities and counties throughout the country. An alternative explanation is that relying on "outside activists" from other regions was a deliberate policy aimed at undermining local social relations and alliances that could have delayed collectivization. Both reasons, I believe, influenced the use of outsiders in the district of Lieşti, though I cannot say which reason weighed more heavily.

Several of my interviewees from Vadu Roşca blamed a certain Vintilă Marin for the use of violence in their village. According to an interviewee, Marin had been appointed in 1957 as the First Party Secretary of the Galați region. Prior to this, Marin had allegedly distinguished himself through the rapid ("in a few days") and extremely violent collectivization of the Dobrogea region. Knowing of Marin's bad reputation, the mayor of Vulturul at that time opposed the arrival of Marin's collectivization team in the commune—the use of violent teams allegedly being Marin's favorite "persuasion" strategy.[32] According to this former mayor:

> I opposed the presence of such teams in the commune. Then, Chiriță [a district-level Party activist and a possible underling of Vintilă Marin] yelled at me: "You've revealed your true face: You're against collectivization!" I tried to resign on the spot but I was told: "Just wait and see. You'll resign on our terms, not yours!" They threatened to jail me [if I failed to participate in collectivization]. It was a *momentous process that even I could not understand!* [My emphasis][33]

At first glance, it is difficult to assess the significance of the mayor's opposition. It seems that, indeed, in Vadu Roşca there were no teams of industrial workers, although in neighboring villages (e.g., Hânguleşti, Maluri, Călieni, Năneşti) there were around five hundred industrial workers and Party activists. The composition of these persuasion teams is somewhat unclear. It is certain that most team members were from outside the village or district. In the first stage of collectivization, it appears that these teams consisted entirely of workers and Party activists from nearby industrial centers, who were not from the village or commune they were assigned to. My interviewees suggested that members of these teams were paid by the number of peasants they persuaded to join the collective farm—a possible explanation for their excesses and violent methods (such as beating up peasants). According to the former mayor of Vulturul:

> These guys were supposedly backing me up, but I couldn't stand them. […] Two hundred of them would enter the village and go from one end to the other. I told myself that these teams would get into trouble in Lieşti [the neighboring commune], where the peasants had been free since the time of Stephen the Great [a famous 15th century monarch].

After the 1957 rebellion, the composition of collectivization teams changed. They now mainly included peasants and workers from neighboring villages, communes, and regions or from places where collectivization had been successfully completed. My interviews suggest that the teams in Vadu Roşca and Năneşti were of peasants and workers from Pechea—the first commune to be collectivized in the Galați region. Moreover, the persuasion teams in Vadu Roşca, Năneşti, and probably other nearby villages often bragged about the accomplishments of Pechea's GAC: "Whenever diseases broke out in our livestock, we were told how well the animals were doing where there were collective farms."[34] Propaganda movies, brought to these villages by mobile film units, were meant to illustrate the benefits of socialist agriculture and were often accompanied by mobilizing slogans, such as "Plant a seed and from it sprouts/Springtime lilies by the thousand," or "Work together on our field/Brings us all a bigger yield!"[35]

Other times, illustrating the advantages of collective farming took much more direct forms, such as with one of my interviewees from Năneşti who initially opposed collectivization. The local police took him by car to Pechea to see for

himself how well the peasants were doing there; to be sure he would be fully convinced, they beat him up on the way to Pechea and on the way back to Năneşti. After this instructive journey, he signed up and, for a short time, was a staunch advocate of and worker in the "Tractor" GAC.

As mentioned previously, when collectivization resumed in Vadu Roşca in 1960, the persuasion teams included more locals than in 1957. According to a former school teacher in Vadu Roşca:

> Most often, the collectivization team included a worker from the city of Focşani, a worker from the crafts and consumption cooperative [from other villages], two people from around here, and a Party activist from the district. Being a smooth talker was the only selection criterion for joining the team. I was a team member myself but by then we were using quite different means [than before the rebellion]; now, we talked with people nicely and tried to convince them with economic reasons. I used to warn my relatives ahead of time that I was coming to visit them with the team. My aunt and uncle would say: "Mind your own business and don't come around here with those guys! Remember, we brought you up!" I had to watch my mouth when I was a member of the collectivization team. I didn't really believe what I was saying [about collective farms], but I had to do it. I had no other choice. At the end of the day, the head of the team would return to Galați but I would stay here living with the villagers. And if I'd treated them badly, they'd have set my house on fire![36]

How did the villagers react to the visits of Party activists and sympathizers of the new regime? The previous excerpt nicely illustrates their attitude toward locals co-opted into the persuasion teams. The schoolteacher claimed not to have worked very hard to persuade people of the advantages of collectivization, and my conversation with the former mayor of Vulturul, cited previously, also shows how much he disapproved of the methods used by "outsiders." Similar frictions were recorded in Năneşti. According to a former president of the collective farm, "The teams had no idea how to talk to the locals. The activists leaped on people and beat them, so they hid wherever they could; but the teams would hunt them down with the help of the police. Party activists [sent in from the region] did terrible things; they beat up the peasants with clubs. During a Party meeting at the Party county offices, I told my bosses: 'I'll collectivize, but without Party activists who beat people up!'" Or, "Party activists and team members would come to my house and say: 'Comrade B., please come along, because people won't join the collective unless they see you with us!'"[37]

As if this were not enough, "Party activists and other members of collectivization teams forcibly took produce from peasants or from the GAC. I myself beat up a Party activist who had taken some cheese from people […] In such cases, I made them pay for what they took! I would tell them: 'Comrade, who gives you

the right to take stuff from us for free? Doesn't the Party pay you well enough? You have double the salary [of other workers]."[38]

Conflicts between local authorities and district activists were sometimes solved by appealing to the legitimacy and prestige of local authorities. The ability to curb the abuses of persuasion teams and Party activists depended on how many connections the mayor or the collective farm president had in the district (or in Bucharest). Put another way, according to the logic of Party clientelism, the career, power, and authority of a mayor or farm president were a function of the power of their political patrons. In the words of a former president of the collective farm in Năneşti, "I used to say to the members of collectivization teams: 'I work, comrades, I don't drink [like the team activists]! I'm making progress!' The regional Party secretary loved me for this."[39] The second president of the collective farm in Năneşti, who eventually became the commune mayor, also talked about the importance of having high-ranking political patrons. He proudly showed me two photos in which he appeared alongside Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and three where he appeared with Nicolae Ceauşescu and other communist leaders. The photos had been taken at various meetings and Party Congresses.

Sometimes, as I have shown, the frictions between local authorities and "outsiders" were informally solved through appealing to political patrons or negotiation. In other cases, villagers and local authorities had to invoke the law to make their case. We have seen previously how the first president of the collective farm in Năneşti denounced the illegal requisitions made by collectivization teams. The mayor of Vulturul commune adopted a similar position when he pledged that collectivization would not be carried out by force but in the spirit of the law, through the peasants' free consent. Ceauşescu's attempts to pacify the peasants in neighboring villages illustrate this strategy well. For instance, during his visit to Năneşti in 1958, Ceauşescu criticized the abuses made during collectivization, recommending the return of peasants' entry petitions to the GAC, which had been secured by force. As a result, with only four exceptions, all the peasants in Năneşti withdrew their petitions for a short time.

As mentioned before, prior to 1957 collectivization teams did not visit Vadu Roşca, which was relatively isolated. Of the representatives of the new regime who did visit the village, the most visible were the tax collectors and, later, the collectors of quotas. For Vadu Roşcans in the early years of communist rule, the collector was "a pimp, a pauper, and a drunk"—and therefore corruptible. To impede complicity with the locals, quota collectors were sent in from outside.

If at first glance the matter of quotas appears an inexorable process no one could escape, in these two villages there were at least two exceptions. I refer here to what Daniel Lăţea discusses as strategies of negotiation, evasion and bargaining, either based on long-existing social ties or created ad hoc as a function of specific local contexts.[40] The first part of my interviewees' comments generally emphasized the tragedies involved in collecting these requisitions and taxes. In Vadu Roşca and Năneşti, requisition quotas were based on the amount

of land and the livestock owned by a household. My respondents also claimed that requisition quotas "tended to increase geometrically with the amount of land owned."[41] This perception was accurate, for according to official documents, at the national level requisition quotas were calculated as a function of a family's surface area and not as a function of land productivity. Also, the quotas were mandatory; any failure to deliver them to the state entailed criminal charges.[42]

In order to ease this burden, some peasants from Vadu Roşca and Năneşti would declare that they owned less land than they actually did. However, "the communist authorities figured it all out. Eventually, the communists found out that there was more land in the village than the peasants declared. But the communists wouldn't give it back: 'This is what you declared, this is the tax you paid, that's that!' and so the communists got extra land this way."[43] In another interviewee's words, "the tax collector would come to your house and if he found stuff [that you had not declared], he would confiscate it. He would even take the flour from the flour bin!"[44] Similarly, "My father tried to hide some stuff and he built a fake wall in the stable, and he hid wine and foodstuffs behind it. But we were caught; probably, a neighbor informed on us. As a result, I was expelled from school."[45]

Yet as I was conducting my interviews, an increasingly complex picture of the requisition process emerged.[46] "The requisition quotas were a function of your ties to village officials. If you had a beautiful wife or daughter, you were friends with the policeman, the mayor… you get what I mean, right?"[47] Or, "You could bribe the Party activist or the tax collector. When they would come to collect produce, you would lay the table and serve them a chicken. You would fill their pockets [with presents] and they would close their eyes."[48] The case of B., the only *chiabur* in Vadu Roşca, nicely illustrates how locals co-opted activists from outside. B. housed the tax collector sent in by the district authorities. "But B. had two beautiful daughters… they were the most beautiful girls in the whole region."[49] One of the daughters had an affair with the tax collector; in turn, he taught her how to get her father's name struck from the list of *chiaburi*. Specifically, B. donated to the state two of the 10 ha of land he owned. Since he now owned less than 10 ha of land, he was subsequently taken off the list of *chiaburi*.

The third strategy of legitimizing and institutionalizing the new agricultural policy consisted of recruiting highly respected peasants into the party and collective farms. Between 1944 and 1948, the Romanian Communist Party's personnel policies were extremely welcoming of new Party members. As a result, according to Robert King, the number of Party members rose from 1,000 in 1944 to around 800,000 in 1948 when Party membership was further consolidated by the absorption of 260,000 members of the former Social Democratic Party.[50] Subsequently, this open house policy was drastically revised. The Gheorghiu-Dej faction in Bucharest accused the Pauker faction of lack of vigilance in recruiting

new Party members, in consequence of which some "class enemies" and "elements with unhealthy origins" had allegedly joined the Party. Pauker was also accused of having made a secret deal with former members of the interwar fascist movement, the Iron Guard. According to these accusations, when former Iron Guardists jumped ship she had closed her eyes, permitting them to enter the Communist Party in exchange for their loyalty. Yet, as King and Levy note, this policy of "don't ask, don't tell [about your fascist past]" was not only adopted by Ana Pauker and her faction, but by the entire leadership of the Romanian Communist Party in 1944—Dej included.[51] The reason was that at the end of World War II, the Romanian Communist Party lacked proper territorial representation, whereas the former Iron Guardists possessed superior organizational skills, and maintained an impressive grassroots network in regions that were essential to consolidating the Party's power.

In Vadu Roşca and Năneşti, the majority of the (few) Party members joined between 1944 and 1948. And, according to my interviewees, in both villages former Iron Guardists were among the first to join. Beginning in 1948, however, recruitment took a new turn: according to Gheorghiu-Dej, from 1948 to 1955 the Party took in no new members. At the same time, the membership criteria were tightened. No one from the former exploiting classes was admitted, and each candidate, as well as all existing members, were subjected to extensive verification, with a mandatory period of probation before they could achieve full membership. In my two communities, some of the members of the local Party chapter were admitted after this probation. Some were recruited either in the village (especially Năneşti) or in other contexts, such as during their military service or in high school or vocational training.

Recruiting new Party members is but one part of the story of constructing the Party-State. In connection with collectivizing, the other part of the story was attracting people into the TOZs or GACs (later called CAPs, see the Glossary of Terms) without their also having to become Party members. Those who did were usually the heads of these farms or of brigades within them, but the majority of those recruited into socialist agriculture did not automatically join the Party.

The strategies for recruiting both new Party members and new collective farmers followed the logic of *Party clientelism*. This was based on "principled particularism," which means establishing relations or social ties between the Party and a loyal minority (workers, or in this case, peasants) toward the goal of instituting control over the larger mass of workers and peasants.[52] This principled particularism, suggests Andrew Walder, implies a *deliberate* policy of recruiting and rewarding a minority who have proven to be loyal. What distinguishes Party clientelism from other informal structures (such as cliques or rival factions) is that whereas traditional patron-client relations are built upon personal loyalties and can develop in the absence of formal organizational structures, "Party clientelism does not exist apart from the Party's formal organizational structure."[53] That is, it emerges from and is created by standard party recruitment and lead-

ership practices. At the same time, although structurally similar to patron-client relations, Party clientelism differs in being deliberately cultivated "from above," or the Party leadership and patrons, "to below," or ordinary Party members and clients. By contrast, other kinds of clientelistic relations are usually formed from below, develop in the absence of formal organizational structures, are most often built upon personal affinity or loyalty, and imply a considerable degree of free choice compared with Party clientelism.

"Principled particularism"—discrimination in favor of regime loyalists—was explicitly inscribed in the Romanian Communist Party's statute and recruitment policies. For instance, in Romania (among other communist countries) individuals who had "unhealthy origins" (i.e., they belonged to "enemy," bourgeois or exploiting classes) were stigmatized, discriminated against and denied Party membership.[54] Conversely, individuals with "healthy origins"—that is, workers, (poor) peasants and their offspring—and other individuals who displayed their commitment to the Communist Party enjoyed special advantages. These might take the form of access to scarce goods and resources (most notably housing), education, and other services.

To attract peasants into the GACs and TOZs and cultivate their loyalty to the regime, the Party used reward strategies similar to those used with industrial workers. I treat these at greater length below, and will mention here only a few illustrative tactics. Peasants who joined GACs or TOZs received the best land in the commune, and their children were promised educated careers in the city or jobs at the new industrial centers. Initially, their pay in kind from the GAC was substantial. According to the first president of the collective farm in Năneşti:

> We were very generous with members of our collective farm: in 1961, we gave them 12 kilos of corn for each work-day… The collective farm bought pigs and sheep for our members. [At Harvest Day] we used to parade up and down the village with a marching band, a red flag, and carts full of produce, meat and wine [to show more reluctant peasants the benefits of joining the GAC].

Peasants who initially refused to join the collective farm, however, perceived the new regime as "a plague, not a parent." They were assigned the least fertile land in the village; their taxes and requisition quotas were huge; they were told that their children would be expelled from school or from employment; and sometimes they were beaten up by collectivization teams. According to one interviewee: "It would've been easier if they'd shot you dead, but instead they drove you crazy with beatings."[55]

2.3. Images of the state and of the newly powerful

Kenneth Jowitt has argued that socialist Romania had a "ghetto" political culture:

> As in the past and as in a ghetto, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the regime or official sphere represented "trouble," being identified as the locus of demands and sanctions rather than of political support and recognition. The result was the adoption of a calculative, instrumental, and often dissimulative approach to the official or public sphere of life.[56]

Jowitt considers that this significant social distance (and aversion) regarding the official sphere existed even prior to the installation of Romania's communist regime. At the local level, before 1945, the tangible representatives of the abstract entity called "the State" were mayors, tax collectors, priests (to some degree) and teachers. Representatives also included a few eminent figures, such as the representatives of the political parties (e.g., Liberals, Peasantists and Legionaries) in Năneşti. Contact with the new state, and with what it would come to represent for the fates of the locals, initially had a mediated character, that is, it was mediated by those who had fought in the war against the Soviet Union or by the propaganda of the right-wing Antonescu regime. Soon after the 1946 elections, which were won by the communist alliance, the inhabitants of these two villages began to experience the new order more immediately. In previous sections, I have detailed the problem of the new regime's representatives, beginning with its "alien" activists and continuing with the "teams," the mayors, etc., and ending with the heads of the first GACs. Some of these, as I have shown, were perceived as truly reprobate characters, while others enjoyed a more positive image in local contexts.

But how did people perceive the new regime's leaders? Daniel Lăţea (this volume) notes the confusion that accompanied his respondents' memories of collectivization, some of them unable to remember whether it was done under Gheorghiu-Dej or Ceauşescu. I did not encounter any such confusion with any of my respondents. Obviously, this owes something to the fact that Nicolae Ceauşescu came into the village after the revolt in an attempt to pacify the villagers. On the basis of declarations made by one leading participant in the revolt:

> When they arrested me, I thought they would shoot me, but I didn't care! They stuck me in a room with a dark-skinned young fellow with curly hair like yours, and he asked me my name. I told him, and he said to the soldiers, "Search him!" That was Ceauşescu, I found out later.[57]

The then-mayor of the commune told me, in regard to this direct meeting with Ceauşescu after the revolt in Vadu Roşca was quelled:

> [Some soldiers and activists] asked me, while we were all gathered at the school, "Is there a cemetery here in Vadu Roşca?" My blood ran cold. An activist said, "We have some little angels here [dead villagers], and look, here comes comrade Ceauşescu, with those flared golf trousers and curly black hair." And he says to me, "And you are…? I accounted for myself:

> "I'm the commune mayor." And he says, "Do you know what happened here?" And I say to him: "Why did what happened here happen?" I didn't tell him people had been killed. And Ceauşescu says: "The spark of the revolt should have been put out!" And he summoned the Party members from the village.[58]

When asked who Ceauşescu was, what relations he had with other leaders, and who those leaders were, the former mayor said:

> "Ceauşescu was secretary to Dej. Dej sent him to school in France. Yes sir, that's true!"[59] "Ana Pauker. Man, I saw her! She was missing an ear! I saw her at the train station in Mărăseşti, through the train window, when she came to work out the Pact for Romanian-Soviet Cooperation."[60] "Gheorghiu-Dej didn't like her, because she wanted to overthrow him. That Jew!"[61] [And, concretely:] "The rigid position of certain communists like Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, and Teohari Georgescu hit Gheorghiu-Dej like a rock. Dej said to Stalin, 'I can't do a thing with these people.' And Stalin told him, 'Go on, clean your house!'"[62] Why did the Soviet troops withdraw from Romanian territory? "Dej got Khrushchev drunk! That's how he managed to get the Soviet troops out."[63]

3. ESTABLISHING NEW PROPERTY FORMS

> "When we Romanians turned against the Germans, they shouted through their megaphones, 'Brother Romanians! You've seen how it is in the USSR, in the *kolkhoz*! They'll feed you in a canteen!'"[64]
> "The collective farm is heaven's gate: You steal, and then you'll fill your plate."[65]

In previous sections I discussed how the decoupling of new institutional structures and practices sometimes produced results contrary to the intentions of the new regime. In my opinion, one of the most important effects of this decoupling was the very delegitimation of the new power and its new property forms. So what did these new forms of collective property consist of, and how did they affect people?

In order to answer these questions I will employ Walder's concept of "neotraditionalism."[66] Analyzing authority structures in Chinese industry, Walder employs "communist neotraditionalism" to contrast "modern forms of industrial authority that emphasize independence, autonomy, impersonality and anonymity [with] traditional forms of authority that rely on dependence, deference, and particularism."[67] More specifically, for Walder communist neotraditionalism is defined by several distinctive elements. First, wages and conditions of employment are not negotiable. Second, "the factory is a focal point for delivery of pub-

lic goods, services, and other material and social advantages that are not readily available from other sources."[68] Finally, the Party tends to exert absolute control over all organizations of labor, and hierarchical leaders have absolute power over the allocation of benefits and rewards.[69]

The elements mentioned above create and reflect what Walder calls organized dependence, that is, "economic and social dependence on the [socialist] enterprise, political dependence on the Party and management, and personal dependence on supervisors."[70] Although Walder's analysis focuses on industry workers, in my opinion the concept of "organized dependence" also applies to peasants in collective farms.[71] In what follows, I will discuss how new forms of property were institutionalized and how state dependency was created in the two villages studied.

3.1. First contacts with new property forms

In Vadu Roşca, people came into contact with the new property forms *indirectly*, via the war prisoners who returned from the Soviet Union and would tell stories of about life in USSR *kolhozes,* where "people had nothing to eat," or "where everybody at the *kolhoz* ate from a big, single pot." It seems that the former prisoners, with the exception of those from the Tudor Vladimirescu division, were among the staunchest opponents to collectivization. In Vadu Roşca, the first agricultural association (or TOZ—see Glossary of Terms) was established in 1956 and included 21 families and a total of 26 ha of land. As compared to the other villages in Vulturul commune, it seems that in Vadu Roşca collectivization enjoyed less success. For instance, the first TOZ established in Vulturul on March 11, 1956 included 51 families. In the village of Hânguleşti, three TOZs were created in 1956 (i.e., "Viața Nouă," [New Life] "Răscoala" [The Uprising] and "30 Decembrie" [December 30]) that included 59 families and 67 ha of land. In the same year, in Maluri, another village in Vulturul commune, two TOZs were established, with 27 families and 35 ha of land.[72]

After the 1957 rebellion, the collectivization of Vadu Roşca was stopped. When it resumed in 1960, the means employed by persuasion teams were different (that is, non-violent). "The attempts to persuade peasants to join the collective farm [after 1957] were honest. People were told about the benefits of collectivization and attempts were made to convince them of such benefits with real arguments and true facts."[73]

In Năneşti, the first two agricultural associations (TOZs) were established in 1956 and included 37 families. Compared with Vadu Roşca, Năneşti "enjoyed" the sustained attention of collectivization teams. Most of the local *chiaburi* were imprisoned, while other "reluctant (or reactionary) peasants" were beaten up. As mentioned previously, in 1958 Ceauşescu paid a visit to Năneşti in order to discuss the collectivization and pacify the area. After 1958, the campaign continued with less violence and, in 1959, Năneşti's first collective farm, "Tractorul" [The Tractor], was established.

3.2. How did the collectivization process unfold and who was most active in it?

On this question, the opinions of my interviewees are divided. Some claimed that the eleven members of the Vadu Roşca Communist Party chapter were among the first to join the collective farm because they were "social climbers and drunkards. They were not driven by ideology, but rather by the benefits of joining the collective farms. P.C., the man who attacked the car of the party secretary [at the beginning of the rebellion] was illiterate."[74] About the same P.C., one of my interviewees said that "he was a Party member, it's true, but could not even read that board bearing the village's name."[75] Others—including the first president of the collective farm in Vadu Roşca—claimed that among the earliest to join were also some of the richest peasants in the village. Joining TOZs and—subsequently—collective farms was quite profitable for many rich peasants, particularly at the beginning. Those who became members were exempted from quotas—which were enormous, for rich peasants—and seemed to receive good money and large amounts of produce. These generous payments were intended to convince others of the advantages of membership.

In Năneşti, for example, the leaders of the first TOZ were peasants who enjoyed the reputation of being "hard working people" (*buni gospodari*). Recruiting well-respected people into the collective farm was one of the main strategies during the early days of collectivization. As discussed previously, this strategy illustrates the logic of principled particularism, which established special or privileged relations with a minority of peasants who were loyal to the new regime and convinced of collectivization's benefits.

3.3. Strategies for attracting peasants to the collective farm

As I mentioned earlier, activists threatened reluctant peasants that if they did not sign up, their children would be denied access to school. For instance, the father of a former schoolteacher from Vadu Roşca joined the TOZ so that his son could continue his studies at the Pedagogical School in Galați: "My father had been a prisoner of war [in Russia] and kept refusing to join the collective farm. But the 'persuasion teams' used to come all the time: 'What will become of your son if you don't join the collective?' Eventually, he gave in and joined the agricultural association [TOZ]. Yet he also said: 'Ok, I'll join [the TOZ], but I will never ever join the collective farm!" After his father died, however, the schoolteacher's mother joined the collective farm: "I was doing my military service when my mother joined the collective farm. She wrote me that a Party activist had told her that I would be granted a leave from the army to visit her if she would agree to join the collective farm. And she did agree. What nonsense! This is how Party activists lied to people!" In other cases, children of reluctant peasants were temporarily expelled from school until their parents agreed to join the collective farm: "'Let's see…', the schoolteacher would say, 'Is there anybody left whose parents still haven't joined? Look, there are only two of you left!' He pointed his finger at me and another girl. So I went home and said: 'Come on, father, why don't you join

the collective farm? There are only two of us left and the teacher is always pointing at us!' My father, however, still refused to join the collective farm."[76]

In most cases, such pressures eventually made parents give in and sign up. There were nevertheless exceptions, of course. One of the few villagers who refused to join the GAC even after the bloody repression of the 1957 revolt in Vadu Roşca managed nonetheless to get his son into the theological seminary. He managed it through his good relations with the former village priest, one Miştode, who had advanced in the church hierarchy to a relatively important position in the Buzău bishopric.

Undoubtedly, for some peasants, economic incentives were important in bringing some peasants into the agricultural associations and collective farms—especially in the early days, when members received good pay and material incentives:

> Requisition quotas increased geometrically with the land owned; we couldn't fill these quotas because we didn't have adequate machinery. And people would talk to their neighbors who were members of a collective farm, and the neighbor would say he was doing well […] It was pretty good in the collective farm: if you worked hard, you had a good life. For instance, a neighbor of mine who had nine children and was really poor got a lot of produce after he joined. Life in the collective farm wasn't bad. We had a good life until 1975 or 1980.[77]

The benefits that collective farm members received implied huge costs for non-members. For instance, fields were consolidated in both agricultural associations and collective farms by undoing the boundaries separating individual plots. The most fertile land plots in villages and communes were reserved for the TOZ and CAP; non-members were given "whatever land was left." At the same time, "whether the crops were good that year or not, you, as a non-member, had to meet the requisition requirements. And there was no way you could do that. People tried to hide produce, but were not terribly successful at it. The tax collectors and requisition inspectors would come to your house with the police and search everywhere."[78]

As readers might recall, prior to the rebellion no collectivization teams had visited Vadu Roşca. It seems, however, that at least two villagers from Vadu Roşca were forced to join collectives in other villages. As I mentioned above, many peasants from Vadu Roşca manufactured products from water-reeds and would sell these in other villages and communes, sometimes a good distance away. Collectivization teams in the neighboring villages of Suraia and Pechea apparently stopped two people from Vadu Roşca and asked them whether they had joined the collective farm or not. As they were not members of the collective farm, they were told that their goods, wagons, and horses would be seized if they would not agree to sign, on the spot, a petition to join the collective farm. In another case, a man from Vadu Roşca was stopped on his way home by *three* different collectivization teams and he had to write *three* different petitions to join the collective

farm. Alongside people's direct testimony to the violence of the persuasion teams, in Vadu Roşca we also have indirect accounts of the nature of the persuasion work done by these teams (some of my respondents referred to them as "club-happy," because they liked to use clubs). Thus:

> In Pechea, one fellow hid himself in the oven to avoid the team that had come to visit him, but his foot stuck out just a bit. "Sign up!" ordered one of the guys in the team. "No!" And the guy put ink on his toe and so he signed up "of his own free will." He didn't even have to get out of the oven.[79]

These and many similar stories seemingly radicalized the peasants in Vadu Roşca: "We knew they would beat us up. This is what they did to S.S. in Pechea." A collectivization team cornered him and threatened him: "'You enroll in the collective farm or we'll kill you!'"[80] According to one of the leaders of the rebellion, "People were returning all beaten up, and they signed into the GAC." More than this: "When we found out that violence had erupted in the village of Suraia, we said: 'Hey, let's go to Suraia and watch how they beat people up.'" According to this respondent:

> In Suraia, I was involved in an incident with a policeman [accompanying a collectivization team]. I broke a shovel on his back! The news spread in Vadu Roşca. People were saying: "S. beat up a policeman and stoned the police car." In Vadu Roşca, people were saying that we should unite and stand firm against the police and collectivization teams, because "look at what S. did… the police won't do anything to us [if we resist]."[81]

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this study I have analyzed the process of collectivization in two villages in Vrancea county. In Vadu Roşca, peasants' resistance to collectivization embraced extreme forms and the authorities responded in kind. By comparison, in Năneşti, collectivization was less eventful but not devoid of conflict altogether. In both cases, I discussed the construction of the Party-State and the institutionalization of new property forms. In regard to the former, I showed how the logics of principled particularism and Party clientelism were employed to co-opt peasants into the new political-economic structures. From the standpoint of sociological neoinstitutionalism, I deem the late 1940s and the 1950s a period marked by coercive institutional change. One of the important effects of all types of institutional change is the decoupling of new institutional forms from the practices used to implement them. As discussed previously, the decoupling of institutions, intentions and practices occurred at multiple levels. In the case of collectivization, *one of the main outcomes of this decoupling was the delegitimation of the new forms of property and, implicitly, of the new regime*.

Some readers may rightfully ask why the peasants from Vadu Roşca rebelled. I must admit to having no definite answer to this question, but in what follows I sketch several possible explanations for these peasants' mobilization.

Initially, I believed that the rebellion was a response to the violence perpetrated by the collectivization teams. As I found out later, the "club-happy" collectivization teams had not visited Vadu Roşca *prior to the rebellion*. The locals' experiences with collectivization had only an *indirect* or *mediated* character. For instance, villagers from Vadu Roşca *had heard* from other people that, in neighboring villages and/or in other parts of the country, collectivization teams used violence to force people to join collective farms. Also, most villagers in Vadu Roşca *had heard* that some people in neighboring villages had opposed collectivization. According to my interviewees, such stories about the violence of collectivization teams and about resistance in neighboring villages explain in large part the mobilization of peasants in Vadu Roşca. I do not exclude another factor: namely, a seeming lack of firmness by the authorities toward resistance in other settlements. The villagers might have also (naively) believed that the relative physical isolation of Vadu Roşca could stop the persuasion teams at the borders of their village. I also heard of friction between the villagers from Vadu Roşca and those from Vulturul (the commune's center). Some Vadu Roşcans blame collectivization and its excesses on the people from Vulturul, whom they recall telling, "Why don't you make your collective in your own village, Vulturul, and then we'll do ours."[82] Moreover, as I discussed previously, land-based social inequality between poor peasants—potential supporters of collective farming—and middle peasants was low. Similarly, the TOZ established in Vadu Roşca before the revolt had very few members, compared with those in other villages in the commune. Finally, collective farms enjoyed a bad reputation because of prisoners of war, who adamantly denounced the difficult life of Soviet peasants in *kolhozes*. All these factors can explain the high degree of mobilization and participation in the rebellion among Vadu Roşca villagers.

I must mention, however, other opinions regarding the "real" causes of Vadu Rosca's rebellion against collectivization. Readers should keep in mind that the following opinions were expressed either by other villagers who did not take part in the rebellion or by former local authorities. According to the former mayor of Vulturul:

> There was a sort of collective psychosis; villagers were afraid that collectivization teams were about to show up and beat the hell out of them. A human being is a human being as long as he can control himself. When he loses control of himself, he's no longer human, he's a dog. When I arrived in Vadu Roşca [on December 1], I was welcomed with curses. Initially I wanted to defend the villagers, but they reacted towards me in a manner completely different from what I expected. They swore at me. Even a good friend of mine, C., swore at me. [When they took the mayor hostage] I told them: "I will die here, but you won't get away alive, either! You idiots!" I

> woke them up. I told them: "Wake up, guys, what are you doing? You've ruined this entire village! The collective farm will be set up but not by violence, and not now!" How could I tell them anything else? Could I tell them that there wouldn't be a collective? Even so, they continued to attack the car with their axes. A few women rushed to my rescue: "Let him go, he was a good man!" No kidding! They were talking about me in the past tense: "He *was* a good man"![83]

According to another respondent, "[participants in the rebellion] were drunk. The whole night [before the rebellion] they emptied bottles and became agitated. That's why they did what they did!"[84] A villager who did not witness the events claimed that "the people who had plenty of land—B. and others like him—gave alcohol to the poorest people and instigated them, saying: 'Get on with it, guys, because [the activists] will come to take our land away!' And only the poorest and stupidest peasants went to fight the authorities. The rich guys didn't follow suit; those who had a lot of land kept a low profile, hidden in their houses."[85] (I encountered other villagers who did not participate in the rebellion and who shared similar alternative accounts of it.)

The behavior of regional and district authorities also influenced peasants' mobilization and rebellion, as did its violent repression in December 1957. First, collectivization teams were, indeed, overzealous in neighboring villages. The locals blamed this fact on the Party secretary of the Galați region, Vintilă Marin (on this, see note 34 in this chapter and Constantin Iordachi's study in this volume). Second, the reaction of communist authorities on December 1–4, 1957 was highly disproportionate to what actually happened in Vadu Roşca. As readers might recall, the village was surrounded by a battalion of Securitate troops from Tecuci and isolated from the rest of the commune; then the regional authorities declared a state of emergency. Considering that Vadu Roşca numbered only 400 families, such a massive deployment of forces is indeed surprising.

What determined this massive deployment of force? The village of Vadu Roşca is situated on the Focşani–Nămoloasa–Brăila line of military fortifications, which had a strategic role during World War II. Along this line were many ammunition and gun deposits. In fact, more than 30 years after the war, military equipment and unexploded mines were still being discovered in villages situated along this line. As my interviews suggest, communist authorities may have thought that the locals still had arms and ammunition left over from the war. Yet, as the authorities came to find out only later, Vadu Roşca villagers had no guns or ammunition.

> After we were arrested, one of the guys who came with the Tecuci battalion told us: "If we had found you with guns, we would have wiped this village from the face of the earth."[86]

Translated from Romanian by Cornel Ban and Katherine Verdery

NOTES

Acknowledgments: First, my thanks go to the villagers from Vadu Roşca and Năneşti, who shared with me painful episodes from their past. I am extremely grateful to Popa Soare, history teacher in Vulturul, who has helped me tremendously in conducting this study and understanding what happened in Vadu Roşca. The study would not have been possible without Katherine Verdery and Gail Kligman, who invited me to join their project. Thank you so much! Also, I thank the editors of this volume, Constantin Iordachi and Dorin Dobrincu, for their encouragement and comments on previous drafts. I have greatly benefited from discussions with Sorin Antohi, Liviu Chelcea, Daniel Lăţea, and Călin Goina; all errors are of course my sole responsibility. I dedicate this study to the villagers from Năneşti and Vadu Roşca, who opposed an absurd regime with great dignity and many sacrifices.

1 The presence of Nicolae Ceauşescu in Vadu Roşca is a controversial matter. For instance, Lavinia Betea, in her work *Maurer şi lumea de ieri. Mărturii despre stalinizarea României* (Arad: Ioan Slavici, 1995) provides interviews with Alexandru Bârlădeanu and Gheorghe Apostol. According to these interviews, Ceauşescu coordinated the repression of the peasant rebellion. But Gheorghe Apostol says that the Vadu Roşca rebellion took place in 1959 (and not in 1957, as it did). In an interview for a daily newspaper, Apostol tells again the story of Ceauşescu's involvement in the rebellion, but this time he places it in 1949! See "Confesiunile ultimului mohican al dinastiei comuniste: interviu cu Gheorghe Apostol," *Jurnalul Naţional*, online edition, February 11, 2004. Gaston Marin, a key figure of the Romanian communist regime, also states that Ceauşescu was involved in the repression of the 1957 revolt, but he talks about "several villages along the Olt river [in a totally different part of Romania—my note]." See Gaston Marin, *În serviciul României lui Gheorghiu-Dej. Însemnări din viaţă* (Bucharest: Evenimentul Românesc, 2000), 185. My interviewees in Vadu Roşca and in Năneşti, both those who participated in the rebellion and those who were communist leaders, said that Ceauşescu came to Vadu Roşca only *after* the Securitate troops fired upon peasants. In other words, Ceauşescu was involved only in the investigation that followed the rebellion.

2 M.A., 78 years old, male, former President of the People's Council [mayor, that is] in Vulturul commune between 1956 and 1961, September 20, 2001.

3 N.B., 87 years old, male, the first president of the collective farm in Năneşti, middle-income family, September 25, 2001.

4 On sociological neoinstitutionalism, see John Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," *American Journal of Sociology*, 82 (1977) 3, 340–363; for a programmatic declaration, see Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, eds., "Introduction," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1–40.

5 I conducted nine interviews in Vadu Roşca and 12 in Năneşti in September 2001 and 2002. In order to ensure full anonymity, the initials I employ in this study to designate my respondents do not correspond to their real identities. Also, some interviews are less (historically) accurate than others but I preferred to let my respondents speak, treating the lack of historical accuracy as an indicator of the confusion that surrounds interpretations of the 1957 events.

6 Unfortunately, Vadu Roşca was almost entirely destroyed by floods in the summer of 2005 and all villagers moved to a safer part of Vulturul commune.

7 D.N., 63 years old, male, former school teacher and school director in Vadu Roşca, September 14, 2001.
8 I thank the editors of this volume for their clarifications on this point.
9 It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the differences among various strands of neoinstitutionalism (i.e., the old institutionalism, the new institutionalism—as developed by economists and adopted in political theory, and sociology—and neoinstitutionalism, developed mainly in the sociology of organizations). On this point, see, W.R. Scott, *Institutions and Organizations* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1995); W.R. Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998); Ronald Jepperson, "The Development and Application of Sociological Neoinstitutionalism," *EUI Working Papers*, Florence, Italy, 2001; for historical institutionalism in political science and sociology, see Elisabeth Clemens and James Cook, "Politics and Institutionalism: Explaining Durability and Change," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25 (1999), 441–466. While other strands of institutionalism emphasize either the normative, coercive, or the regulatory character of institutions, neoinstitutionalism focuses on the normative, cultural, and cognitive aspects of institutions.
10 Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organization Fields," *American Sociological Review*, 48 (1983), 147–160 (emphasis mine).
11 W.R. Scott, "Unpacking Institutional Arguments," in Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).
12 Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria românilor: de la origini pînă în zilele noastre* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1992).
13 See Vladimir Tismăneanu's excellent study *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). As Tismăneanu notes, during the interwar period, the Polish communists—following strictly the Comintern's position—also denounced the Versailles and Trianon treaties. Contesting the very existence of post-World War I Poland and Romania was the worst strategy for gaining popular support in two nations that for a long period saw their territories divided among powerful neighbors.
14 Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons*, 279, note 37.
15 See Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel* (New York: The Free Press, 1992). See also his *Stalinism for All Seasons*.
16 Kenneth Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
17 Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations."
18 Clemens and Cook, *Politics*.
19 Jepperson, *The Development*, 65–67.
20 Ivan Szelényi (with R. Manchin, P. Juhasz, B. Magyar and B. Martin), *Socialist Entrepreneurs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 57 (emphasis mine).
21 See Tismăneanu, *Reinventing Politics*; Akos Róna-Tas, *The Great Surprise of the Small Transformation: The Demise of Communism and the Rise of the Private Sector in Hungary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

22 See Tismăneanu, *Reinventing Politics*; and Stepan Linz, *Problems.*

23 Robert Levy, *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

24 For a discussion of this hypothesis, see Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), especially chapter 1. In this interpretation, "weak" state does not refer to the socialist state's capacity to monitor and sanction political opposition; this capacity was indeed great. Here, the concept of the "weak" state refers to the strong dependence of the higher party echelons on the information provided by the lower party echelons, particularly with respect to economic planning and the real statistical figures about available resources and actual productivity.

25 C.M., 63 years old, male, participant in the rebellion, sentenced to jail, middle-income family, September 15, 2001.

26 D.N., 63 years old, male, former school teacher and School director, September 14, 2001.

27 S.D., 78 years old, male, V.R., the first president of the Vadu Roşca collective farm; subsequently he was a team leader in this collective farm until his retirement, middle-income family, September 19, 2001.

28 L.S., 82 years old, male, "independent" peasant, who refused to join the collective farm in Năneşti; middle-income family, May 25, 2002. In the 1980s, he managed to get back, with huge effort, some of his land that had been confiscated in the late 1950s.

29 G.O., 57 years old, female, former member of collective farm in Năneşti, middle-income family, May 22, 2002.

30 M.A., 78 years old, male, former president of the People's Council [mayor] of Vulturul commune in 1956–1961, September 20, 2001. The workers' strikes my respondent refers to took place in 1929 at Lupeni (in Jiu Valley) and in 1933 at Griviţa (in Bucharest). For more information about these strikes, see Tismăneanu*, Stalinism for All Seasons*, 81–82 and 125–126.

31 M.A., September 20, 2001.

32 The issue is how villagers in Vadu Roşca *perceived* Vintilă Marin. According to Constantin Iordachi's study in this volume, Vintilă Marin represented a relatively moderate faction in the local Party chapter. Marin had failed in the collectivization of Dobrogea and had been replaced with Vasile Vâlcu, who successfully carried out the collectivization project there in 1957. As Iordachi suggests, Marin may have been radicalized by his failure. On the other hand, it is possible that the echoes of the 1957 violence in the Dobrogea region influenced Vadu Roşca villagers' perceptions of Marin. I thank the editors of this volume for their clarifications on this point.

33 M.A., September 20, 2001.

34 D.N., September 14, 2001.

35 M.A., September 20, 2001.

36 D.N., September 14, 2001. Daniel Lăţea (this volume) mentions a similar example. The peasants in Dobrosloveni said they had refused to join the collective farm for fear that their neighbors might set their houses on fire. Lăţea advances a very interesting hypothesis: in order to counteract *vertical* pressures from central, *raion* and local authorities, villagers in Dobrosloveni invoked the community—a "person" with whom they had strong *horizontal* ties—as a constraint on their willingness to join the collective farm.

37 N.B., 87 years old, male, the first president of the collective farm in Năneşti, middle-income family, September 25, 2001.

38 N.B., September 25, 2001.
39 N.B., September 25, 2001.
40 In Vadu Roşca and Năneşti, I too found evidence of negotiations contrary to official directives. It appears, however, that these negotiations and bargains were less frequent here than in Dobrosloveni, where Lăţea worked. I believe the rebellion in Vadu Roşca limited the scope of the informal negotiations Lăţea describes. (See Lăţea, this volume.)
41 N.N., 72 years old, male, former member of the collective farm in Năneşti; his father was listed as a *kulak* several times due to repeated frictions with people in the mayor's office, May 25, 2002.
42 Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, "Categoria socială a «chiaburului» în concepţia PMR din anii 50," *Analele Sighet*, 8 (2000), 284–298.
43 G.O., 57 years old, female, former member in Năneşti's collective farm, middle-income family, May 22, 2002.
44 C.A., 75 years old, male, key participant in the rebellion, sentenced to jail, middle-income family, September 16, 2001.
45 B.S., 56 years old, male, former secretary of the Năneşti party chapter in the 1980s, son of a middle-income peasant, September 29, 2001.
46 Daniel Lăţea (this volume) also mentions the complex character of the interviews he conducted in Dobrovsloveni. As mutual trust developed between my respondents and me, accounts about requisitions quotas, collectivization, and the collective farms became more nuanced and less stereotyped.
47 C.A., 75 years old, male, key participant in the rebellion, sentenced to jail, middle-income family, September 16, 2001.
48 D.N., September 14, 2001.
49 N.S., 73, male, one of the leaders of the December 1957 rebellion in Vadu Roşca; poor peasant, sentenced to jail; after his release, he preferred to work outside the village, in construction, September 17, 2001.
50 Robert R. King, *A History of the Romanian Communist Party* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1980), 72.
51 King, *A History of the Romanian Communist Party*; Levy, *The Rise and Fall*.
52 Andrew Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 24–25. Principled particularism is the opposite of universalism or so-called meritocratic selection. In formulating this ideal type, Walder starts from Turner's distinction between sponsored and contest mobility. See Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*; Ralph Turner, "Sponsored and Contest Mobility in the School System," in Thomas M. Shapiro, ed., *Great Divides: Readings in Social Inequality in the United States* (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998). "Under *sponsored* mobility elite recruits are chosen by the established elites or their agents, and elite status is *given* on the basis of some criterion of supposed merit and cannot be *taken* by any amount of effort or energy. Upward mobility is like entry into a private club where each candidate must be 'sponsored' by one or more of the members" (Turner, "Sponsored," 75; emphasis in original). Social mobility under communism was similar to sponsored mobility and implied early recruiting and testing of potential elites based on a combination of ascriptive elements (i.e., social origin) and proven track record (e.g., Party loyalty, enthusiasm, the "correct" attitude towards the Party, revolutionary vigilance). See Bobai Li, Andrew Walder, "Career Advancement as Party Patronage: Sponsored Mobility into the Chinese Ad-

ministrative Elite, 1949–1996," *American Journal of Sociology*, 106 (2001) 5, 1375 (details in parentheses are mine). Individuals hand-picked and sponsored by senior Party officials were trained for top positions in the *political* hierarchy; on this point, see Andrew Walter, "Career Mobility and the Communist Political Order," *American Sociological Review*, 60 (1995), 209–228; see also Andrew Walder, Bobai Li and Donald Treiman, "Politics and Life Chances in a State Socialist Regime: Dual Career Paths into the Urban Chinese Elite," *American Sociological Review,* 65 (2000), 191–209.

53 Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*, 25; for a detailed discussion, see 162–186.

54 Party clientelism is characterized by a set of instrumental attitudes. Similar attitudes are found in social relations such as *blat* (in the former Soviet Union) or *pile* (props, in Romanian); in such social relations, individuals cultivate useful relations with others in order to obtain certain goods and services. Nonetheless, clientelistic relations are not reducible to "*pile*" or "*blat.*" Clientelistic relations imply vertical solidarity, differences in prestige, power, and resources between patrons and clients; clientelistic ties also imply enduring relationships that are extremely personalized and rationalized in terms of loyalty and trust. For a definition of the patron-client relationship, see S.N. Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Societies* (Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 48–49. "Props" and "*blat*" imply short-term, less personalized relationships among equals. They emerge in an economy of shortage, while clientelistic relations can develop in the absence of such economic conditions. See Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*; Alena Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange* (Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

55 F.A., 68 years old, male, independent peasant, refused to join the Năneşti collective farm. He worked the little land that the mayor's office assigned him and made a living from transportation services; middle-income family, May 26, 2002.

56 Jowitt, *New World*, 70–71. For a discussion of dissimulation, deception, and "doubling" [*dedublare*], see especially Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 13–16; see also Verdery, *What Was Socialism*.

57 N.S., September 17, 2001.

58 M.A., September 20, 2001.

59 N.B., September 25, 2001.

60 S.D., September 19, 2001.

61 N.B., September 25, 2001. Many respondents' recollections about Ana Pauker are fairly thin. The most frequent response was limited to, "She was a big leader of the Communist Party," after which they would invoke the slogan, "Ana, Luca, and Dej/ Strike fear into the bourgeoisie."

62 L.V., 70 years old, male, one of the first Party members in Năneşti, September 28, 2001.

63 L.V., September 28, 2001.

64 I believe I'm not the only one to have met this theme concerning life in Soviet collective farms. Some of my respondents told me that it originated in the propaganda films of the Antonescu regime. Others claimed that the people who returned from the front were the main source of this image.

65 This was a popular saying in both villages and, undoubtedly, it might have circulated in other parts of the country as well.

66 Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*, 6. Jowitt also talks about the neotraditional character of Leninist regimes. By "neotraditionalism" Jowitt refers to the survival of

elements of pre-communist (traditional) order despite Leninist parties' emphasis on structural-institutional modernization. At the center of "neotraditionalism" are "informal practices that [became] corrupt practices, practices that subvert[ed], rather than contribute[d] to, the [Leninist] Party's formal goals and general interests; practices that directly threaten[ed] the Party's organizational integrity." Jowitt, *The New World Disorder*, 121

67 Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*, 10.

68 Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*, 11.

69 Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*, 11.

70 Walder, *Communist Neotraditionalism*, 12; see also Andrew Walder, "Organized Dependence and Cultures of Authority in Chinese Industry," *Journal of Asian Studies*, XLIII (November 1983) 1, 51–76.

71 For instance, although collective farm brigades or teams were organized on principles of vicinity and kinship, Cernea notes that the collective farm did not lead to the suppression of the extended family as the matrix of social organization during communism (cited in Jowitt, *New World*, 33). Jowitt notes that what changed as a result of collectivization were the extent and levels of involvement of the extended family in the activities of collective farms. One can interpret this as illustrating Walder's notion of "organized dependence;" see his *Communist Neo-Traditionalism*.

72 Popa Soare, "Antecedente ale cooperativizării comunei Vulturul," unpublished manuscript, 1979.

73 M.A., September 20, 2001.

74 M.A., September 20, 2001.

75 S.D., September 19, 2001.

76 B.S., May 28, 2001.

77 S.D., September 19, 2001.

78 N.B., September 25, 2001.

79 C.M., September 15, 2001. Since many peasants were illiterate, they used a thumbprint instead of a signature. In this case, the activist expedited things by using the man's big toe.

80 N.S., September 17, 2001.

81 N.S., September 17, 2001.

82 N.S., September 17, 2001.

83 M.A., September 20, 2001.

84 S.D., September 19, 2001.

85 C.R., 50 years old, male, office clerk in Vulturul commune, May 25, 2002.

86 N.S., September 17, 2001.

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Conclusions

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This book has provided 17 papers on collectivization in Romania, ranging from broad national-level overviews to case studies of small villages. Based on interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives and employing rich empirical material, the book contributes to understanding collectivization in several important respects. First, although we focus on a single country, our case studies open up new possibilities for comparing patterns of collectivization in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, shedding new light upon the relationship between national and international factors. In what follows, we describe some similarities and differences between the process of collectivization in Romania and in other Eastern European countries. Second, the volume highlights the theoretical and methodological implications of research on collectivization for our understanding of the nature of the communist rule, with an emphasis on the first phase of the institutionalization and consolidation of the new communist regimes. Finally, the book confirms the value of an interdisciplinary orientation combining social and cultural history with sociology and anthropology. Toward the end of our Conclusions we illustrate this point in our critical evaluation of emerging neo-totalitarian interpretations of the communist experience.

1. COLLECTIVIZATION IN EASTERN EUROPE

Romanian collectivization is best understood by placing it in the wider comparative perspective of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. The findings from our case studies enable us to approach that goal. In this section, we provide a short overview of the main stages and types of collectivization across the region and their outcomes, which reflect different patterns of socialist agricultural production.[1] In accounting for national variations, we consider several factors, among which the most notable are the strength of the Communist Party, the level of urbanization and industrialization, the balance of forces between the regime and the peasantry at various times, and the extent of Soviet involvement and its impact. These factors suggest that collectivization and socialist agriculture should be evaluated not in terms of a checklist of economic successes or failures, but in view of their long-term impact on rural societies.

1.1. Stages in the collectivization campaign

The collectivization of agriculture in post-1945 Eastern Europe followed the Soviet blueprint by and large, being part and parcel of the general process of Sovietization. The main preconditions of collectivization were the communist take-over and the implementation of extensive land reforms, in order to eliminate the aristocracy as a major social player and to complete the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution, thus creating—according to the official dogma—the basic premises for constructing socialism. By 1948, if not earlier, Communist parties had fully taken power in each Eastern European country, with the "fraternal" assistance of the Red Army and with varying degrees of popular support. Sometime between 1945 and 1948, most countries had effected land reforms of varying magnitude. Per capita, the largest amount of land was redistributed in Hungary (where two-thirds of the peasants had been landless) and Poland, then Albania, then Romania and Czechoslovakia, then Yugoslavia, and last Bulgaria (where the property structure was already the most egalitarian before World War II). In countries that redistributed a great deal of land, the communists initially gained some popularity (doubtless an objective of the reform), even though the recipients would later have to give it away.

Land reforms and political consolidation allowed the new regimes to engage in the arduous task of collectivizing the countryside. The beginning of the campaign can be traced back to 1948, when the Cominform affirmed the urgency of collectivization, and Eastern European leaders hastened to comply. This was true even in countries that deviated from the Soviet line, such as Yugoslavia—expelled that year at Soviet urging on the grounds that Tito was too independent, was ignoring class struggle in the countryside, and was not drawing the appropriate lessons from the Soviet experience but instead trying to build socialism with private property. Although no detailed Soviet masterplan was drawn up for collectivization in Eastern Europe, national campaigns throughout the region emulated the Soviet example, with certain deviations. The initial drive began in 1948–1949, interrupted by a period of retreat after Stalin's death in 1953. The process was then resumed around 1955, sometimes with further interruptions (e.g., the Hungarian revolution of 1956). By 1962, at the latest, it was brought to conclusion, using less coercive tactics in this second stage, in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Romania.[2] Yugoslavia and Poland began to collectivize but did not pursue the second stage, abandoning collectivization in 1953 and 1956 respectively, and remaining with large percentages of privately owned land.

1.2. The Soviet model and patterns of collectivization in Eastern Europe

On the whole, Eastern Europe proved harder to collectivize than had the Soviet Union. While in the latter the collectivization campaign lasted slightly over five years (1928–1933), in Eastern Europe the process was more protracted, lasting close to a decade in the GDR (1952–1960), but a decade or longer in Bulgaria (1948–1958), Albania (1948–1960/1966), Hungary (1948–1961) and Romania (1949–1962). The process was fastest and most violent in the GDR and Bulgaria,

which most closely followed the Soviet model in this respect, and slowest in Romania.[3] The length of the collectivization campaigns reflects the weak position of Communist parties in rural areas and their lack of adequate political and administrative leverage over the peasantry. As Edmund O. Stillman puts it: "The apathy of the Eastern European mass parties and the absence of any genuinely national revolutionary élan… made it impossible (or unwise) to mount more than a calculated war of attrition against the peasants."[4] But it was also partly because most leaders tried to hold down the pace of collectivization so as to avoid the excesses of Soviet violence. All Eastern European Communist parties utilized coercion against the rural bourgeoisie, the so-called *kulaks*, who were persecuted, hounded and humiliated as in the Soviet Union.

None of these parties, however, fully emulated the Soviet practice of class struggle in rural areas. The most notable difference was that the *kulaks* were not "liquidated as a class," as Stalin had ordered in late 1929. This single departure from Soviet policy may account for both the slower pace of collectivizing in Eastern Europe and also a lower level of violence. That is not, however, to minimize the coercion and violence experienced in the region. Eastern Europe had gulags, of course, for political prisoners and other important class "enemies"—note Romania's Danube Canal, Czechoslovakia's Jachymov uranium mines, etc. Nonetheless, while the deportations, humiliations and executions that did take place in the region caused major social disruptions and traumas, for the most part the Soviet experience of mass expulsions and countless *kulak* deaths from cold and starvation did not occur. Instead, sometimes after lengthy debate over what to do with them (send them away, or allow them into the collectives despite fears that of sabotage from within), Communist parties in the end accepted *kulaks* into collective farms. In many communities, that was the point at which large numbers of villagers who had resisted joining gave in and enrolled.

Moreover, in contrast to the Soviet Union (where 95.5% of Russian peasant households lived under communal forms of land tenure when collectivization began,[5] peasants in Eastern Europe had a longer history of private landowning and were harder to pry loose from their land. This feature might also explain the major difference in the legal framework of land ownership between the Soviet Union and Communist Eastern Europe: whereas in the former the land was nationalized, in the latter the land remained formally in the peasants' private possession.[6] Even if in practice this legal distinction was not socially consequential, as peasants could not freely and fully dispose of their property, in theory the land could nevertheless be inherited or alienated; and members could theoretically withdraw from the collective farm with a piece of land (though not their original plot).[7] This difference in the legal status of land ownership between Soviet Union on the one hand, and Eastern Europe on the other, was to prove important during the process of post-communist decollectivization.

Other, more minor, differences between the Soviet and the Eastern European campaigns of collectivization are due to the fact that the Soviets did not intend to replicate their own experience faithfully, as they had apparently learned from

some of their previous errors and tried to adjust their policies accordingly.[8] In addition, the marked change in climate after Stalin's death, including Khrushchev's rapprochement with Tito in 1955, meant that from then on, greater divergence was permitted as each country adapted collectivization to its own peculiarities. The quashing of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 showed, however, that there were limits to departures from the Soviet example.

As a consequence, country-specific collectivization paths differed considerably by the 1960s. The countries fell into three groups: 1) Poland and Yugoslavia, where the abandonment of collectivization produced various degrees of mixed (state and private) systems; 2) Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, which all achieved more or less full collectivization on the Soviet model; and 3) Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Hungary, which ended with modified forms of collectives, as well as greater possibilities for investing in agriculture owing to their greater industrial development compared with the others.[9] The diverging trajectories arose from each country's specificities on a number of variables, such as how big its Communist Party was, how well organized and supported it was in the countryside, the degree of existing industrialization, the changing balance of forces between the regime and the peasantry and (related to this) the extent to which the government had made itself autonomous in relation to Moscow.

In Hungary, for example, within the third group, initial attempts to collectivize turned villages into battlegrounds. Both in 1953 and with the 1956 uprising, the campaign was interrupted and peasants withdrew from the collectives *en masse*. After the uprising was put down, the new Party leadership was not only wholly dependent on the Soviets for its existence, but was also completely compromised in the eyes of the peasantry, who had initially been won over by the large land distribution in 1945, but who now saw the regime for the Soviet puppet it was. In pursuing collectivization nonetheless, the Party leadership had to make a number of concessions, which included retaining some reforms passed during the uprising. The Hungarian leadership soon departed from Stalin's policy of liquidating the *kulaks*, who were instead invited into the collectives in hopes that their high status would attract their fellows to join. These divergences, plus innovative experiments with various forms of contractual production arrangements, were to make Hungary's collectivized agriculture the most successful in the bloc.[10]

East Germany offers yet another variant within the same group.[11] There, the leadership—like in Hungary and Poland—was highly dependent on the Soviets but had initially declared that it would not collectivize. In the context of an agrarian crisis in 1952, however, that decision was reversed. Progress was slow at first, owing to the Party's weak control over its rural cadres, who were dubious of the benefits of collectivizing and were as likely to dissuade farmers from joining as to convince them. Resistance was very stiff, with nasty reprisals against cadres. After the relaxation in 1953, when masses of collectivists withdrew from their farms, a milder campaign was continued, but in 1958 a second assault began with extreme force. By this time the Party had trained many more cadres, and—much as in the Soviet Union—it blitzed the countryside with urban activists. The country was

fully collectivized in two years. Here the rural population gained no leverage over the Party, as in Hungary, nor did Party leaders need rural supporters, as in Poland, given that over 40 percent of the labor force worked in industry.[12] Moreover, there was no plan to increase autonomy from the Soviets, as in Poland.

Poland offers a useful contrast with this cluster of countries.[13] At the outset, the regime was just as dependent on the Soviet Union as East Germany was, and the Party was very poorly organized in rural areas. Its first leader, Gomułka, attempted to keep a certain distance from the Soviets and was purged for it in 1948, but not before he had made plain his view that collectivization in Poland would have to wait, for no government there could last without support from the peasantry. Given the amount of wartime devastation, the process was begun slowly and not pushed very far. In 1956 Gomułka returned to power and reasserted his drive for increased independence from the Soviet Union, renouncing collectivization (it comprised 23 percent of the land as of 1956). While the other bloc countries launched their second wave, then, most of Poland's collectives fell apart; the leadership preferred private agriculture as both a better source of food for the country's sizable working class and, therefore, a more certain route to regime stability. Instead of collectivizing, the government would put resources into agriculture and build up the state farm sector. In Sokolovsky's judgment, what kept Poland free of collectives was the government's desire for greater independence and its consequent need for a solid base among its peasant and working classes.[14] The outcome in Yugoslavia was similar, and for broadly similar reasons, such as factionalism and dissension within the Party over agricultural policies, peasant resistance to collectivization and the Party's need for mass domestic support after the split with the Soviets.[15]

Romania shares some elements with the first and third groups, but in its own peculiar mix. Like Poland, at the end of World War II it had a minuscule, poorly organized Communist Party in rural areas, shared a border with the Soviet Union, and had a history of resentment against Russia's expansionist policy. Its communist elite was completely dependent on the Soviet Union, like Poland's and Hungary's, but until 1965 there were no plans for greater independence, which meant less reliance on peasant support (hence less peasant leverage against collectivization). Unlike Poland or East Germany, its level of industrialization was low: in 1950, 74 percent of the population was employed in agriculture and only 12 percent in industry. It was to reverse this situation that Romania's leaders found collectivization appealing. Making slower progress than Bulgaria against heavy peasant opposition, the pace of collectivization resembled Czechoslovakia's. The campaign abated between 1953 and 1955, then resumed gradually and picked up speed after 1956. Between 1958 and 1962 a concerted assault brought most of the peasantry into collective farms. At no point had the peasants found themselves with any leverage against the Party, as had the Hungarians; therefore, the leadership made no concessions in collectivization policy (no reforms, constant propaganda, and no substantial funds to develop agriculture, which was instead sacrificed to industrialization).

Overall, Romania implemented one of the most radical programs of any communist bloc country, resembling in this sense Albania and Bulgaria. Nearly all agricultural land was collectivized, with the exception of mountainous regions, which were spared by Romanian authorities only after learning from Bulgaria's failure to organize collective farms in the mountains. It is probably no coincidence that the countries least endowed with industry collectivized fully following closely the Soviet Union—the better to pursue industrialization with forced savings and a proletarianized rural labor force.

1.3. Soviet influence and Romania's path to collectivization

As it is apparent from our papers, Soviet influence lay at the heart of Romania's collectivization: the policy was imposed despite the hesitation of some of Romania's leaders, and the Soviet model of the *kolkhoz* predominated by the time the campaign was finished. Romanian political scientist Stelian Tănase argues that owing to the weakness of the communist movement in Romania and the divisions within its leadership, Moscow did not have a sufficiently powerful partner there to whom it could entrust governance. Hence the presence of Soviet troops (withdrawn in 1958) and numerous Soviet advisors, the last of whom left in 1964. Romania's communist leaders were effectively vassals of the Soviet Communist Party.[16] At various points, the Soviet advisors' voice on one or another policy issue was decisive—such as, for example, the decisions to keep *chiaburi* out of GACs and to push for early collectivization in Constanța (Iordachi's paper, this volume). It was the Soviet advisors who insisted on high levels of food requisitions (despite extensive rural opposition) for the success of the currency reform they had been instrumental in creating.[17] Tănase concludes that Romania's communists had less independence than those of any other Eastern European state, and Romania's repressive apparatus was more closely tied to the Soviet Union than any other structure of rule in the country.[18] This fact is surely relevant to the many similarities between Romanian and Soviet collectivization, as well as to how the country's course differed from that taken by Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary—all more fractious Soviet allies during the 1950s.

While acknowledging the central importance of the Soviet factor, this volume nevertheless takes issue with the standard argument that the communist regime was essentially an occupation force that did not set its own political agenda and never managed to build political legitimacy. In line with the official propaganda of the Gheorghiu-Dej regime, many later historians presented the collectivization campaign as a political project that was upheld exclusively by the Muscovite faction of the Party and opposed by the "national" or "local" communists. Since 1989, scholarship has challenged the neat division of communist elites according to their ethnic origin and relationship to Moscow, pointing out that political polarization was more complex.[19] Likewise, this book supports the view that the so-called "Pauker faction," which Gheorghiu-Dej purged in 1952 and blamed for all the campaign's abuses, was in fact opposed to rapid collectivization, arguing for a more gradual and moderate course. Rather, it was the self-labeled "national" fac-

tion of Gheorghiu-Dej that espoused and then carried out forced collectivization. It was only in the late 1950s and the 1960s that first Gheorghiu-Dej and then Ceauşescu asserted greater independence from Moscow, culminating in Ceauşescu's condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. But by the time that occurred, collectives were well and solidly entrenched in the Romanian countryside.

1.4. Socialist agricultural systems and their evaluation

Taking into account the main features of socialist agriculture in Eastern Europe in the decades following collectivization, Nigel Swain distinguishes four major types of agricultural systems: 1) the Stalinist model, which functioned in Romania and Albania; 2) the neo-Stalinist model, which functioned in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and East Germany; 3) a "quasi-market" system in Hungary; 4) and incomplete collectivization in Poland, resulting in a mixed (state as well as private) system.[20] These systems exhibited marked differences in the type of agrarian structure,[21] in the degree of material satisfaction they generated, and in their longer-term social and political implications, leading in Romania and Albania to the discouragement of private agriculture, low remuneration and the pauperization of peasantry; in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and East Germany, to a system of cooperatives supplemented semi-officially by household plots, certain forms of well-being, and social security; in Hungary, to economic integration and a division of labor between collective farms and household plots, greater prosperity and the relative "embourgeoisement" of peasantry; and in Poland, to an uneasy cohabitation between state farms and private farms, growing social diversity but also lack of confidence in authorities, and continuous political mobilization of the peasantry.[22]

Romania organized one of the most centralized systems of socialist agriculture in Eastern Europe, along with Albania and the Soviet Union itself. Through coercion and lack of viable alternatives, peasants were forced to work for state or collective farms for a minimal wage, much below wages in the industrial sector. The country's collective farms remained among the least successful in the bloc; the result was the gradual pauperization of rural areas, favoring the process of internal migration that accompanied industrialization. The failure of the socialist experiment in agriculture is made evident by the *de facto* reinstitution in the 1980s of the system of requisition quotas on private production that had been abolished in 1956.[23]

Yet, in light of the findings of this book, the mainstream argument that collectivization was an unmitigated economic failure seems just as inaccurate as regime claims that it was an unmitigated triumph. This book shows that in some areas collectivization led to the economic development of farming via capitalization and an injection of modern technology. It also led in some cases to increased social mobility for peasants and a new division of labor within the peasant family. Paradoxically, however, socialist modernization went hand in hand with the revival of certain traditional social phenomena, such as the practice of petitioning

central authorities against local abuses, and the development of clientelist networks and practices of negotiation of power and resources, at various levels. In the light of this mixed legacy, the ambivalent memory that collectivization generates among peasants should be contextualized, by taking into account the identity of those who are remembering; their location and role in the local socio-political context; the specificity of the regions under consideration; and the precise historical period being discussed as well as its relations to the post-Communist period. Ultimately, rather than evaluating the negative versus the positive outcomes of collectivization, it is more important to stress that the radical transformation of economic and property relations in the countryside had deep economic, social and demographic effects, with long-term contemporary consequences.

2. COLLECTIVIZATION AND THE STUDY OF COMMUNIST REGIMES

The oral histories and sociological and anthropological insights put forth in this book enable us to challenge some of the established historiographic clichés on collectivization in Eastern Europe. In the first post-1945 decades, the study of the new communist regimes was dominated by the "totalitarian model," which focused preponderantly on communist ideology and the nature of the political regime, invariably emphasizing issues of "total control," repression and coercion.[24] After the 1960s, the totalitarian model was challenged by social, cultural and anthropological approaches in the field of Soviet studies. "Revisionist" social historians emphasized the magnitude of social transformation and the multifaceted aspects of this process "from below" as well as "from above," and the complexity of social structures in communist societies.[25] Methodologically, they promoted alternative approaches to the totalitarian model, such as the "interest group approach" and the "institutional pluralist model."[26] In the 1980s and 1990s, these approaches gave way to culturalist and anthropological perspectives.[27] Focusing mostly on political language, discourses, practices and rituals, cultural historians and anthropologists employed new theories and methods for studying ideological productions in their cultural environment, leading to fresh insights into the nature of the communist regime in Eastern Europe.[28]

Since the collapse of the communist system, concepts of totalitarianism have undergone an academic rejuvenation in East and West alike. On the one hand, consecrated Sovietologists attempted to reassess the analytical validity of the totalitarian approach in the light of the historical evidence uncovered by access to archives previously inaccessible to researchers.[29] On the other hand, after decades of political interdictions, scholars in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are actively engaged with the vast literature on totalitarianism, trying to adapt existing theoretical offers to the study of their own societies.[30] While many scholars have evaluated the totalitarian model critically and have engaged in innovative comparative and interdisciplinary work leading to alternative concepts that

are meant to capture the complexities and contradictions of communist rule in various countries,[31] others have reverted to the classical model of totalitarianism as if it had never been superseded. Unreflective models of totalitarianism have permeated public discourse as well, being used as a tool of de-legitimizing the past and legitimizing new political elites.

The study of collectivization played an important role both in crystallizing the totalitarian paradigm during the Cold War and in its recent "rejuvenation" in post-Communist Eastern Europe. Yet, while focusing on the war against the peasantry and its heroic resistance against collectivization, the proponents of (neo)totalitarian approaches largely ignored social developments in the countryside, thus marginalizing the importance of the rural world for understanding the nature of communist regimes. Against this tendency, our volume has reassessed the primary importance of the collectivization campaign for the institutionalization of the Party-State, its decisive penetration of the rural world, and the consolidation of its repressive apparatus and bureaucratic institutions at local level.[32] We have also problematized certain issues concerning the nature and capabilities of the socialist state, the level of centralization of the Party and local administration, and the role of violence, resistance, and adaptation to official policies in the collectivization campaign.

To begin with, the customary view that during collectivization the communist Party-State was omnipotent and monolithic appears problematic. Our research confirmed that the Party was not well organized in the countryside and had difficulties securing reliable cadres. There was always a fair amount of chaos and improvisation, lower-level officials often running ahead of or ignoring directives from the center. The archival and anthropological evidence we have uncovered thus suggests a more accurate representation of 1950s Party-State in Romania (and likely other early communist regimes) as an unstable system "in the making." Agents at various levels were torn by internal conflicts and contradictory policy shifts; groping for strategies and political templates, they struggled for appropriate means to carry out their assigned projects. Low-level cadres and Party members proved especially troublesome. They often refused to join the collectives—a matter repeated over and over in central documents—or, at best, tried to join with only part of their land, thus undermining their co-villagers' confidence. In Maramureş region, for instance, when officials investigated why the pace of collectivization was so slow, they found that of 5,114 Party members in the countryside, fully 2,756 had not joined any form of socialist agriculture.[33] Not even collective farm presidents could be counted on to give over all their land.

In order to grasp the relationship between "state organs" and policies at the center and those in the localities, then, the approach advocated in this volume has privileged accounts of social agency and informal social networks over formal institutions or a dichotomous understanding of state-society relations. In so doing, we highlight the roles of Party agents who mediated the collectivization process and of the local cadres responsible for implementing it. Moreover, in our view, we cannot fully understand the history of collectivization without grasping

the dialectic of centralization and decentralization. Throughout the collectivization drive, primary responsibility for conducting it oscillated between central and more localized actors. In 1949, no GAC could be formed without approval from the highest levels. Then, during the first speed-up in 1950, the center gave this task to county committees. By early 1951, the center had reassumed its supervision, only to cede it again in 1952. On the whole, when the pace of collectivization increased, responsibility tended to devolve to lower levels, and when affairs there got out of hand and/or the center resumed the supervisory role, this inevitably slowed things down, partly as a way of retaining control over the local cadres. Their abusive behavior was more likely when the process was decentralized, unleashing competition and careerism among lower-level cadres. Sometimes it was precisely to contain such abuses that centralization was reasserted.

An additional area in which our book challenges resurgent totalitarian models concerns the use of violence and the resistance to it. As we noted above, violence was indeed central to collectivization across the region, in Romania as much as anywhere else. The length of the process, spanning almost thirteen years, demonstrates the Party's inability to subordinate the peasants, the overwhelming majority of Romania's population. Only at the very outset, in 1949, were collectives created without violence. For the rest, it took ample and systematic efforts over a long period and the use of various techniques of physical coercion and psychological terror, supported by an unusually large system of repression, to force the peasantry to give up their land and join collective farms. Its forms ranged from threats and fines to beatings, arrests, public trials, deportations, imprisonment and murder. Whenever violence was reduced, the pace of GAC formation slackened (see Oprea's paper here), though where violence was not employed, there might have been greater *acceptance* of joining, even if belated (see the papers by Goina and Bodó).

Our work makes it clear, however, that violence had many sources and was not simply a centrally-organized reign of terror. It might be unleashed by the central or regional Securitate, by local police at the behest of Party cadres contravening central policy, by local thugs at the urging of district or commune officials, even by villagers against one another, profiting from the general chaos to settle scores. Violence flowed through society in all directions, not just downward. The brutal assault on village social structures and the use of force to secure "voluntary" membership in collectives resulted in widespread, sometimes violent resistance from the villagers subjected to it. The more violence was used to create collectives, the more resistance it met. In settlement after settlement, teams of activists coming to persuade the peasants encountered their targets waiting with pitchforks, scythes, hatchets, and guns. To be an activist at that time was a potentially deadly occupation: peasants often beat them up, threatened their families, damaged their property, or even killed them, including the presidents of newly formed GACs.[34]

Peasants were imprisoned for a variety of forms of resistance: for refusing to join their GACs, for swearing at the GAC president, for failing to plow their fields

within some impossible time frame, for urging others to withdraw from the collectives, for threatening the functionaries who carried out collectivization, for writing petitions for anyone who wanted to withdraw from a GAC or for spreading rumors that the regime would soon collapse because the Americans were coming. Although archival sources are fragmentary and incomplete, they allow us to grasp the level of communist repression in rural areas. At the onset of collectivization, between September 1948 and November 1949, the Securitate arrested 23,597 persons, among which were 10,152 peasants (4,518 middle peasants, 2,979 poor peasants and 2,655 *chiaburi*).[35] In the following years, as the collectivization campaign took off, repression greatly intensified. In December 1953, a report of the Interior Ministry acknowledged that, during 1951–1952 alone, 34,738 peasants were arrested (of which 22,008 were *chiaburi*, 7,226 had medium-size households and 5,504 owned small farms) and 438 show trials were staged.[36] A much larger figure comes from a report by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej at the XXIInd Congress of the Socialist Party of the USSR, held in Moscow in October 1961 and reiterated at the 1961 Plenary of the CC of the RWP which claimed that in summer 1950 and the second half of 1952 alone, 89,000 peasants had been arrested.[37] Although this official figure is probably not reliable, at least it indicates a threshold above which the actual numbers arrested would lie. The frequency of arrests and forms of brutality waxed and waned as the collectivization drive was intensified and relaxed. With the final assault, beginning in late 1958, the number of arrests and sentences to labor colonies and prisons again increased vertiginously, as the regime equated any action hostile to collectivizing with attempts to undermine the political system. Archival sources document the escalating number of peasants arrested between 1956 and 1959, a transitory period from "stagnation" to the "final assault": 705 in 1956, 1,308 in 1957, 1,829 in 1958; and 1,499 in 1959. Overall, the following number of peasants was detained, in various forms, during the first three quarters of 1959: 4,625 in March, 4,928 in May, and 5,341 in August.[38] To these, one has to add the widespread psychological terror, forms of administrative coercion and physical violence employed by pressure groups, euphemistically called "persuasion teams," against non-collectivized peasants, which official statistics do not account for but are widely reported in oral accounts.

Without force, Romanian collectivization would have been impossible. Its use entered into a vicious circle: the role of force confirmed the regime's inability to draw peasants into collectives, but was also a reason for this inability. Resistance bred more force, and force more resistance. It is important to insist on the level of resistance that Romania's peasants displayed, given a view widespread during the communist period among both Romanians themselves and external observers that Romanians were a "cowardly" people who offered no resistance to the communist authorities, unlike "heroic" people such as Poles or Hungarians with their uprisings and strikes. Nevertheless, we must also nuance the equally uncritical image of the peasants' total and unconditional resistance advanced in neo-totalitarian accounts of collectivization, contextualizing it within village social structures. As several contributors to this volume show, poor, middle and well-to-

do peasants all displayed a broad spectrum of reactions to collectivization, ranging from active and heroic resistance, to adaptation, complicity and even cooperation with the regime. Some people benefited from the change—including not just those who served the Party but those whom the previous order had disadvantaged. Together, the combination of oral and archival sources make it possible to assess accounts with greater nuance and reveal the diversity of experiences and perspectives on this crucial period of communist rule. This diversity of sources and viewpoints counters totalizing perspectives about the past.[39]

In conclusion, this volume provides a comprehensive account of collectivization in Romania, opening up a new research agenda based on the interdisciplinary study of communist regimes during their early stages of consolidation and institutionalization. We believe that monographs on national campaigns of collectivization are a necessary precondition for engaging in comparative work on a broader scale. Yet analytical endeavors at the national level are incomplete without understanding the transnational aspects of collectivization and Sovietization in Eastern Europe. As this volume amply illustrates, understanding these entanglements involves the comparison of both "particularizing" and "regionalizing" national campaigns of collectivization. It is our hope that this volume will encourage further interdisciplinary scholarship in Romanian studies, contributing to the *comparative study of communist regimes*—their entanglements and multiple relationships—and illuminating the fate of the peasantry and the evolution of agriculture in their full economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions.

NOTES

1 Parts of this section are drawn from the concluding discussion of Kligman and Verdery (in progress).

2 By this time, more cadres had been trained than in the earlier round, enabling districts to overwhelm villages with activists. See Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945–1965* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 113.

3 It was in 1962 that the process was officially declared complete, but in fact there were still many peasant households that were not yet in collectives by then.

4 Edmund O. Stillman, "The collectivization of Bulgarian agriculture," in Irwin T. Sanders, ed., *Collectivization of Agriculture in Eastern Europe* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1958), 69.

5 Lewin, Moshe. *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: A Study of Collectivization* (New York: WW Norton, 1968), 85.

6 See Karl-Eugen Wädekin, *Agrarian Policies in Communist Europe: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Everett M. Jacobs (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff, 1982). See also Miller's paper in this volume.

7 Wädekin, *Agrarian Policies in Communist Europe*.

8 Wädekin, *Agrarian Policies in Communist Europe*.

9 György Enyedi, "The changing face of agriculture in Eastern Europe," *Geographical Review,* 57 (1967) 3, 362.

10 Nigel Swain, *Collective Farms Which Work?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
11 This summary is informed by Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots,* and Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
12 This figure (for 1950) is diminished by the Soviet removal of a number of East German industries as war reparations.
13 This summary is drawn from Richard J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century—and After* (London and New York: Oxford, 1994); and Joan Sokolovsky, *Peasants and Power: State Autonomy and the Collectivization of Agriculture in Eastern Europe* (Boulder: Westview, 1990), esp. 84.
14 There are numerous explanations for why Poland was allowed to continue without collectivizing its agriculture. Among them are that the Polish Communist Party never fully consolidated its position in the countryside; that the Party needed to cement its relations with workers in the new lands and would not risk the food supply; that with the largest peasantry in the bloc and one of the smallest communist parties, enforcing collectivization would require resources beyond what Poland could muster; and that changes in Poland's boundaries made it advisable to give rural inhabitants in the new territories a stake in the land.
15 Melissa K. Bokovoy, *Peasants and Communists. Politics and Ideology in the Yugoslav Countryside 1941–1953* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburg Press, 1998).
16 Stelian Tănase, *Elite şi societate: Guvernarea Gheorghiu-Dej, 1948–1965* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998), 34; Dorin Dobrincu, "The Soviet Counsellors' involvement in postwar Romanian repressive and military structures," in Alexandru Zub, Flavius Solomon, Oldrich Tuma, and Jiri Jindra, eds., *Sovietization in Romania and Czechoslovakia. History, Analogies, Consequences* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2003), 157–160.
17 Robert Levy, *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 121, 127.
18 Tănase, *Elite şi societate,* 37.
19 See Dennis Deletant, *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State, 1948–1965* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
20 Nigel Swain, "Rurality in modern societies with a particular focus on the countries in Central and Eastern Europe," in *Rural Development in Central and Eastern Europe,* edited by David Brown and Anna Bandlerova (Nitra: Slovak Agricultural University, 2000), 21–34.
21 These divergences across the region are illustrated by figures showing the proportions of the agricultural surface in each of three kinds of farming: private, collective, and state. It is clear from the table that no country exhibited the Soviet pattern as of the mid to late 1980s; and that there are striking differences among Eastern European countries, as well. (In nearly all cases the 1980s figures are larger than they would have been at the end of the collectivization campaign, reflecting a uniform trend toward concentration.)

TABLE 1. *Proportion of Agricultural Land in Various Farm Types, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, 1980s.*

a)	*b)*	*c)*	*d)*
Country	% land farmed privately	% land in collective farms	% land in state farms
Albania	5	74	21
Bulgaria	13	70	17
Czechoslovakia	6	64	30
East Germany	10	82	8
Hungary	14	71	15
Poland	78	4	18
Romania	15	55	30
USSR	2	30	68

Source: Frederic Pryor, *The Red and the Green: The Rise and Fall of Collectivized Agriculture in Marxist Regimes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 101; OECD (2000) *Review of Agricultural Policies: Bulgaria*. Paris: 72, 78 (for Bulgaria). The first column is worded so as to include both land that is privately owned and the personal plots of collective farmers, which inappropriately inflates the so-called "private" sector.

22 Nigel Swain, "Decollectivization politics and rural change in Bulgaria, Poland and the former Czechoslovakia," *Social History,* 32 (2006) 1, 2.

23 The decree was issued in 1956, though it was published only in 1957.

24 For the most influential theoretical models on totalitarianism, see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1958); and Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956).

25 E.g., Ronald Grigor Suny, "Toward a Social History of the October Revolution." *The American Historical Review,* 88 (1983) 1, 31–52; Stephen F. Cohen, "Stalin's Terror as Social History," *Russian Review,* 45 (1986) 4, 375–384; William Case, "Social History and the Revisionism of the Stalinist Era," *Russian Review,* 46 (1987) 4, 382–385; Ronald Grigor Suny, "Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and its Critics," *Russian Review,* 53 (1994) 2, 165–182.

26 E.g., Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Prefects: The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-Making* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969); H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths, eds., *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971); Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

27 Caroline Humphrey, *Karl Marx: Collective: Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); E.M. Simmonds-Duke (Katherine Verdery), "Was the peasant uprising a revolution? The meanings of a struggle over the past," *Eastern European Politics and Societies,* 1 (1987), 187–224; Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch and Richard Stites, eds., *Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Introduction," "Introduction to part I" and "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia" in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Stalinism: New Directions* (London: Routledge, 1999), 1–14, 15–19, 20–46; Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

28 On the agenda of the cultural history on Soviet studies, see Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front*.

29 For attempts to rejuvenate the totalitarian approach, see Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Arrow Books, 1988); Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press, 1990); and Achim Siegel, ed., *The Totalitarian Paradigm after the End of Communism. Toward a Theoretical Reassessment* (Amsterdam: Atlanta, 1990), among others.

30 New research institutes have been created, such as the *Hannah Arendt Institute for Research on Totalitarianism at the Technical University of Dresden*, Germany, *The National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism*, Bucharest, Romania, and the *Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung* (ZZF) in Potsdam. For a review of neo-totalitarian approaches in the former Soviet Union, see Viktor Zaslavsky, "The Post-Soviet Stage in the Study of Totalitarianism. New Trends and Methodological Tendencies," *Russian Social Science Review,* 44 (2003) 5, 4–31.

31 See Mary Fulbrook's call for going beyond "dualistic models of state versus society, regime versus people" in writing the history of GDR, and of reconciling lived experiences with "underlying structures," in *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), xi.

32 See Sheila Fitzpatrick's path-breaking books: *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

33 Aurel Dobeş, Gheorghe Mihai Bârlea, and Robert Fürtös, *Colectivizarea în Maramureş: Contribuții documentare (1949–1962)*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Fundația Academia Civică, 2004), 45.

34 For example, in the commune Uileacul de Munte in the Bihor region, the secretary of the Party branch was attacked (ASRI Fond "Documentar," file 4638: 74).

35 ASRI, fond "Documentar," file no. 9047, vol. 3, f. 43, cited in Vladimir Tismăneanu, Dorin Dobrincu, and Cristian Vasile, eds., *Raportul Final al Comisiei Prezidențiale pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007), 251.

36 ASRI, fond "Documentar," file 7778, vol. 3, 83–91; vol. 27, 1–10, cited in Oprea's paper, footnote 5. See also Tismăneanu, Dobrincu, and Vasile, eds., *Raportul Final*, 252.

37 *Scânteia*, no. 5371, 7 December 1961, 1–2; Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Articole şi cuvîntări, iunie 1961–decembrie 1962* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1962), 206; ANIC, Fond

C.C. al P.C.R., Cancelarie, file no. 53/1961, vol. I, 222, cited in Dan Cătănuş and Octavian Roske, *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Dimensiunea politică,* vol. 1: *1949–1953* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 31–32; Levy, *Ana Pauker*, 142; Introduction to this volume, footnote 2.

38 ASRI, Fond "Documentar," file no. 7778, vol. 3, ff. 154–155, 157, 160–162, 165, 168–171, cited in Tismăneanu, Dobrincu, and Vasile, eds., *Raportul Final*, 253–254.

39 For further discussion, see Kligman and Verdery, work in progress on collectivization in Romania.

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The Communist Take-Over and Land Collectivization in Romania: Chronology of Events, 1945–1962

CONSTANTIN IORDACHI
DORIN DOBRINCU

1945

March 6: The establishment of a Communist-dominated coalition government led by Dr. Petru Groza (1884–1958), the leader of the Ploughmen's Front.

March 23: "The Law on Agrarian Reform" expropriates without any compensation all properties over 50 ha of land, as well as the land of war criminals, ethnic Germans who collaborated with Nazi Germany, and absentees. Part of the land is redistributed to poor or landless peasants in small lots of 5 ha. The aim of the reform was the destruction of large estates.

April 12: Adoption of the "Regulation for implementing the agrarian reforms."

April 19: All private tractors and agricultural equipment are confiscated by the state.

May 15: The establishment of county economic offices for the requisition of agricultural products to be sent to the USSR as part of Romania's war debt.

July 16: The State institutes a monopoly over the circulation and commercialization of agricultural products. In the next months, it also establishes mandatory requisition quotas on all agricultural products.

October 26: The establishment of the Supreme Council of the National Economy, led by Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej.

1946

January 8–9: Plenary of the Central Committee (CC) of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP). The establishment of Party cells in rural areas.

November 19: National parliamentary elections. After an electoral campaign marked by violence and obstruction by the opposition, the Bloc of Democratic Parties, controlled by the communists, claims a sweeping victory. Archival evidence confirms that the results were in fact grossly falsified by the ruling communist-led coalition.

1947

December 30: Forced abdication of King Mihai I. Abolition of the Monarchy and the proclamation of the People's Republic of Romania.

July 29: The Groza government bans the National Peasant Party, the most important opposition party, with large electoral support in rural areas.

October 30–November 12: After a summary public trial, the leaders of the National Peasant Party are sentenced to long-term imprisonment and confiscation of their property.

1948

February 21–23: Congress to unify the Romanian Communist Party and the Romanian Social-Democratic Party. Creation of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP) as a "unique party of the working class."

April 13: The Grand National Assembly adopts the first communist Constitution of the People's Republic of Romania.

June 11: "The Law on the nationalization of principal industrial, mining, insurance, transport and banking entities" is adopted.

June 1: The establishment of the State Commission for Planning (*Comisiunea de Stat a Planificării*).

July 6: Decree no. 121 establishes a system of forced requisitions of grain.

August 30: Decree no. 221 establishes the General Directorate of People's Security (*Direcția Generală a Securității Poporului,* or *Securitatea*). As the main organ of the communist political police, the *Securitate* was to be responsible for massive actions of repression against the anti-communist opposition and of terror against the population at large. It was also actively involved in the collectivization campaign.

October 7: Decree for organizing the Machine and Tractor Stations.

1949

January 25: Establishment of The Council for Mutual Economic Aid (CMEA), to facilitate and coordinate economic cooperation among socialist countries. Romania was a founding member.

March 2–3: Decree no. 83 concerning the expropriation of the last remnants of former landed estates. About 3,000 large landowners are deported to labor camps together with their families.

March 3–5: The collectivization campaign is formally launched by the RWP's Resolution of the Plenary of the CC. The resolution sets up an Agrarian Commission in charge of organizing and supervising the collectivization campaign, led by Ana Pauker, and made up of the Minister of Agriculture Vasile Vaida, the Soviet advisor Veretnikov, and a number of high-level party members.

June–August: The first collective farms are established in Cernatul de Jos (Trei Scaune county), Balțați (Iaşi county), Sântana (Arad county), Buduslău (Arad county), Săveni (Dorohoi county), Drăguşeni (Dorohoi county), Radomir (Romanați county), (Botoşani county) and Răşcani (Vaslui county).

July–August: Peasant revolts against the forced requisition of grains and against collectivization in Roma (Botoşani county); Vorniceni, Avrămeni, Grămeşti, Dersca, Cândeşti, Brăeşti, Cracalia, Dimăcheni, Havârna, Hilişeu, Mihăileni, Zamostea, Liveni, Adăşeni and Mitoc (Dorohoi county); Calafindeşti, Frătăuții Noi, Rogojeşti, Milişăuți, Văscăuți, Bălcăuți, Negostina, Condeşti, Horodnicul de Sus Morjinca, and Ruşi (Rădăuți country); Bălăceana and

Stroieşti (Suceava county); Cheţ, Almaşul Mare, Almaşul Mic, Chenetea, Cociuba Mare, Tăuteu, Bicaciu, Giriş, Girişul Negru, Batăr, Belfir, Coroiu, Ucuriş, Ursad, Craiova, Susag, Diosig, Arpăşel, Tulca, Talpoş, Suiug, Marginea, Saldabagiul, Barcău, Barba, Bicaciu and Marțihaza (Bihor county); Şomoşcheş, Moțiori, Berechiu, Apateu, Şepreuş, Țipar and Vărşand (Arad county); Drăguş, Ucea de Sus, Arpaşul de Jos and Sebeş (Braşov county); Zorgheş and Chijapla (Târnava Mare county); as well as in Făgăraş, Turda and Mureş counties. The revolts are brutally repressed, and numerous peasants are killed, wounded or deported.

1950

January 23–25: At the Fifth Plenary of the CC of the RWP, the Agrarian Commission is replaced with an Agrarian Section of the CC, also led by Ana Pauker, with expanded responsibilities.

June 15 to September: Alexandru Moghioroş temporarily replaces Pauker as head of the Agrarian Section. Massive coercion is used to create and consolidate collective farms throughout the country. 30,000 peasant families are forcibly registered in new collectives. Campaigns to confiscate all *chiaburi's* land; their partial land donations (or "renunciations") are no longer tolerated.

July 23: Decision of the CC of RWP on the new administrative reorganization of the country in regions and districts, copying the Soviet model. Approved by the Grand National Assembly on September 6.

July: Peasant uprisings against forced requisitions occur throughout Romania, in Ilfov, Ialomița, and Vlaşca counties, in the villages of Ciuperceni, Siliştea, Berceni, Tudor Vladimirescu, Cămineasca, Baciu, Udeni, Cosmeşti, Blejeşti, Scurtu, Negreni, Sârbeni, Corbii Mari, Corbii Ciungi, Ghimpați, etc. Authorities respond with more repression, dispatching the militia, the *Securitate* and the army, conducting summary executions and deportations

December 12–13: The first Five-Year Plan is launched (1951–1955), stipulating that 62% of the country's arable is to be collectivized by 1955, and an additional 8% is to be organized in State Farms.

1951

January 13: The regulations for mandatory milk quotas are published. Failure to deliver quotas results in harsh punishment.

March 2: Decision of the CC of the RWP and the Council of Ministers for the economic and organizational consolidation of the existing GACs. Each member of a collective farm is obliged to work at least 80 days a year. At the time, there were 1,029 GACs containing 65,974 peasant families.

June 18: In order to secure the border with Tito's Yugoslavia, approximately 44,000 inhabitants of the Banat border region are deported to the Bărăgan plain, in southeastern Romania.

September 18: Decisions of the CC of the RWP concerning the establishment of collective farms and associations. Excesses, abuses and coercion in the collec-

tivization campaign are openly acknowledged, mostly in Trei Scaune, Târnava Mică, Alba, Vâlcea and Argeş counties.

December 31: The regulations for mandatory meat quotas are published. According to official information, at the end of the year there were 1,089 GACs possessing 301,690 ha of land and enrolling 75,379 families.

1952

May: Purge of the so-called "right-wing deviationist" faction from the party: Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca and Teohari Georgescu. A report of the Interior Ministry dated December 1953 blamed them for the arrest of 34,738 peasants (of which 22,008 were *chiaburi*, 7,226 had medium-size holdings and 5,504 owned small farms) and the staging of 438 show trials during 1951 and 1952.

September 24: The Grand National Assembly adopts a new Constitution, modeled on the 1936 Soviet Constitution.

September 27: Decree on the new administrative reorganization of Romania, reducing the number of regions (see Map 2, page 497) from 28 to 18.

1953

January–February: 252 new collective farms are established.

March 5: Death of Joseph Visarionovich Stalin. Soviet Prime Minister Georgy Maximilianovich Malenkov launches the "New Course" Policy.

Spring: Romanian leaders temporary halt the collectivization campaign.

June 11: The Council of Ministers cancels overdue requisition quotas for 1951 and exempts from payment peasants living in areas affected by floods.

August: Plenary of the CC of the RWP adopts a series of measures relaxing the taxation and quota systems, with the aim of giving incentives to private farmers.

September 10: The payment of overdue quotas for 1952 is cancelled, with the exception of wheat.

October: Massive transfer of 448,000 ha of land from state reserves to collective farms.

December: Active policy to bolster the GACs and TOZs. Decree no. 505 offers preferential tax cuts to collectivized peasants as an incentive for joining the GAC.

1954

January: The Agriculture Department of the CC led by Moghioroş unsuccessfully tries to resuscitate the collectivization campaign. The government grants 10–20% tax cuts to GACs and TOZs.

January 9: Special educational institutions for GAC cadres are established.

January 30: Aggravation of penalties for failures to deliver mandatory quotas.

November 8: The Politburo orders the revision of the lists of *chiaburi*, signaling a more nuanced policy on class warfare.

December 26: The government scraps the food retailing system of rations and grants additional tax cuts, as an impetus to incipient forms of free trade in agriculture.

End of 1954: There are 2,070 GACs containing 178,561 peasant families and 884,194 ha. In addition, there are 2,833 associations containing 139,125 peasant families and 315,119 ha.

1955

January 27–February 7: Following Khrushchev's recommendations on providing incentives for small private farm production, Romanian authorities encourage state contracts for animals and poultry and reduce requisition quotas.

March 1: At the Conference of Agricultural Workers, Gheorghiu-Dej praises the contribution of privately-owned farms to a record corn harvest.

May 14: Signing of the Warsaw Pact, a military organization of socialist countries. Romania was a founding member.

August 4: A new Ministry of Requisitions is created to supervise the quota system.

September 13: The government bans free trade of foodstuffs in order to prevent speculation in grain prices.

December 23–28: The Seventh Congress of the RWP. Launching of the second Five-Year Plan (1956–1960). Gheorghiu-Dej is re-elected First Secretary of the CC. The party abandons the "new course" and aggressively resumes the collectivization campaign. The Timişoara region is criticized for lagging behind in collectivization with only 13.9% of peasant families enrolled in the socialist sector.

End of 1955: The number of GACs increased with 82 units, to a total of 2,152. The number of TOZs almost doubles, from 2,833 in 1954 to 4,471.

1956

April 4: Creation of the Ministry of State Agricultural Farms [*Ministerul Gospodării la Agricole de Stat*].

June 11: Meeting of the CC evaluating the outcome of the experiment on collectivizing the Galați region. Decision to resume collectivization in the whole country.

October-November: The Hungarian revolution and the Soviet military intervention. The events cause a delay in Romania's collectivization campaign.

December 27–29: Plenary of the CC of the RWP. Gheorghiu-Dej demands that the "socialist transformation of agriculture" continues.

End of 1956: There are 2,564 GACs containing 231,392 peasant families and 1,101,650 ha. In addition, there are 8,130 associations containing 452,117 families and 753,352 ha.

1957

January–August: Intensification of bureaucratic-administrative measures to force the peasants to give up their land, resulting in the escalation of rural tensions.

January 19: The Ministry of Food Requisitions Quotas is abolished.

August 2: The Politburo adopts new measures to compel the peasants to enroll in collective farms.

August 6: Decree no. 380 stipulates higher levels of taxation for private farms and TOZs, with retroactive effects, in order to force private owners to join collective farms.

September 21: Decree no. 446 punishes theft of grain with prison terms of up to 12 years and the confiscation of property.

September–November: Growing tensions in rural areas as peasants put up stubborn resistance to the resumption of collectivization. Violent protests in Suraia, Vadu Roşca and Răstoaca (today in Vrancea county) against forced collectivization. The government uses coercive methods.

October 18: The official press announces the completion of collectivization in Constanța region, at a time when collectivized land encompassed only 51% of the country's total land and 52% of the total number of households.

1958

March 14: The Constanța Regional Party Committee and the Regional People's Council publish a development plan for 1958–1960, aimed at turning Dobrogea into the first region with fully socialist agriculture.

April 3–6: Party meeting in Constanța. Gheorghiu-Dej approves the plan for Dobrogea's agricultural development and promises substantial state investments with the purpose of achieving 80–90% mechanization in three years.

November 26–28: Plenary of the CC of RWP. Gheorghiu-Dej triumphantly announces that 1,760,000 families are enrolled in 15,723 collective farms. Peasant revolts in Cuceu (Cluj country); Măceşul de Jos (Gorj county); Ciupercenii Noi and Calafat (Mehedinți county); Dăbuleni and Vâlcele (Olt county); Cioroiaşi şi Băileşti (Dolj county); Dobroteşti, Negreni and Tătărăşti (Teleorman county) and Drăgoieşti (Suceava county), among others.

1959

February–August: Peasant revolts against collectivization in Condrea (Galați County); Vlădaia and Vântu Mare (Mehedinți county); Deleni (Bacău county); Biubega Băileşti and Cioroiaşi (Dolj county); Satu Nou (Galați county); Ciupercenii Noi, Calafat and Dăbuleni (Dolj county); and Cuceu (Sălaj county).

March 6: Gheorghiu-Dej claims that 3.6 million peasants are enrolled in GACs, making up 75% of the total rural population of the Craiova region, 72% of the Galați region, 56% of the Timişoara region, etc.

March 30: The Grand National Assembly issues a decree for liquidating all forms of exploitation. Rich peasants are obliged to join collective farms and to donate their land to the state. In exchange, their mandatory quotas and their official classification as *chiaburi* are abolished, marking the end of open class warfare in the countryside and of anti-*chiaburi* propaganda. However, this also entails a final coercive campaign for *chiaburi* to join the collective farms.

July 13–14: Plenary of the CC of the RWP announces that 67% of the country's arable land is collectivized.

1960

March 1: Official statistics claim that GACs possess 76.6% of the country's arable land and 76.4% of the total rural population.

June 20–25: The Eighth Congress of the RWP. Launching of the third Five-Year Plan (1960–1965). Gheorghiu-Dej is re-elected First Secretary of the CC of the RWP. He announces that 81% of the rural population is enrolled in collective farms or associations. Only 680,000 peasant families are still outside the socialist sector.

December 24: Adoption of a new law on the administrative reorganization of the country. The number of regions is reduced from 18 to 16. (See Map)

December: Peasant revolts in Vadu Roşca (Vrancea county) and in Mozăceni Deal (Argeş county). Violent confrontations with the authorities occur, followed by brutal repression.

1961

June 30–July 1: Plenary of the CC of the RWP orders the consolidation of the newly established GACs. Report on the full collectivization of the Bucharest district.

September 1: The socialist sector in agriculture encompasses 82.8% of the total arable land; collective farms own 66.6% of the total arable land.

December 18–22: Conference of Collective Farmers in Bucharest celebrates the completion of collectivization. Collectivized farmers from all corners of Romania give laudatory speeches.

1962

January–February: Peasant uprisings in Drăgoieşti (Suceava county) and Mărceşti (Dâmbovița county).

March 16: The collectivization campaign is officially declared complete. The socialist sector in agriculture encompasses 96% of the arable land of the country and 3,201,000 peasant families. Mountainous regions are exempt from collectivization.

March 18: The region of Suceava is declared the last region of Romania to complete collectivization.

March 27–April 3. Extraordinary session of the Grand National Assembly proclaims the completion of collectivization. The session is attended by 11,000 peasants.

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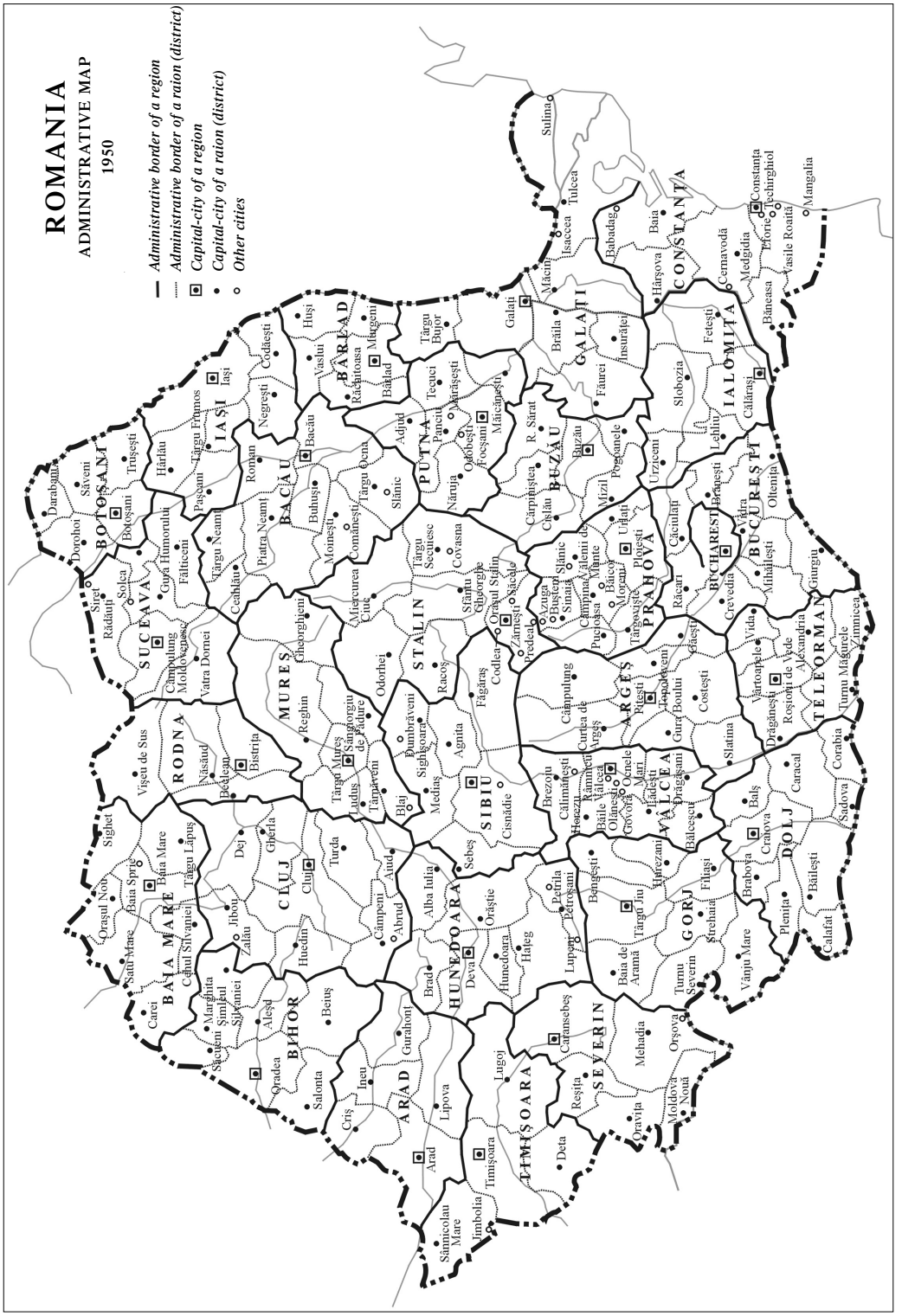
LIST OF VILLAGES RESEARCHED: GENERAL FEATURES

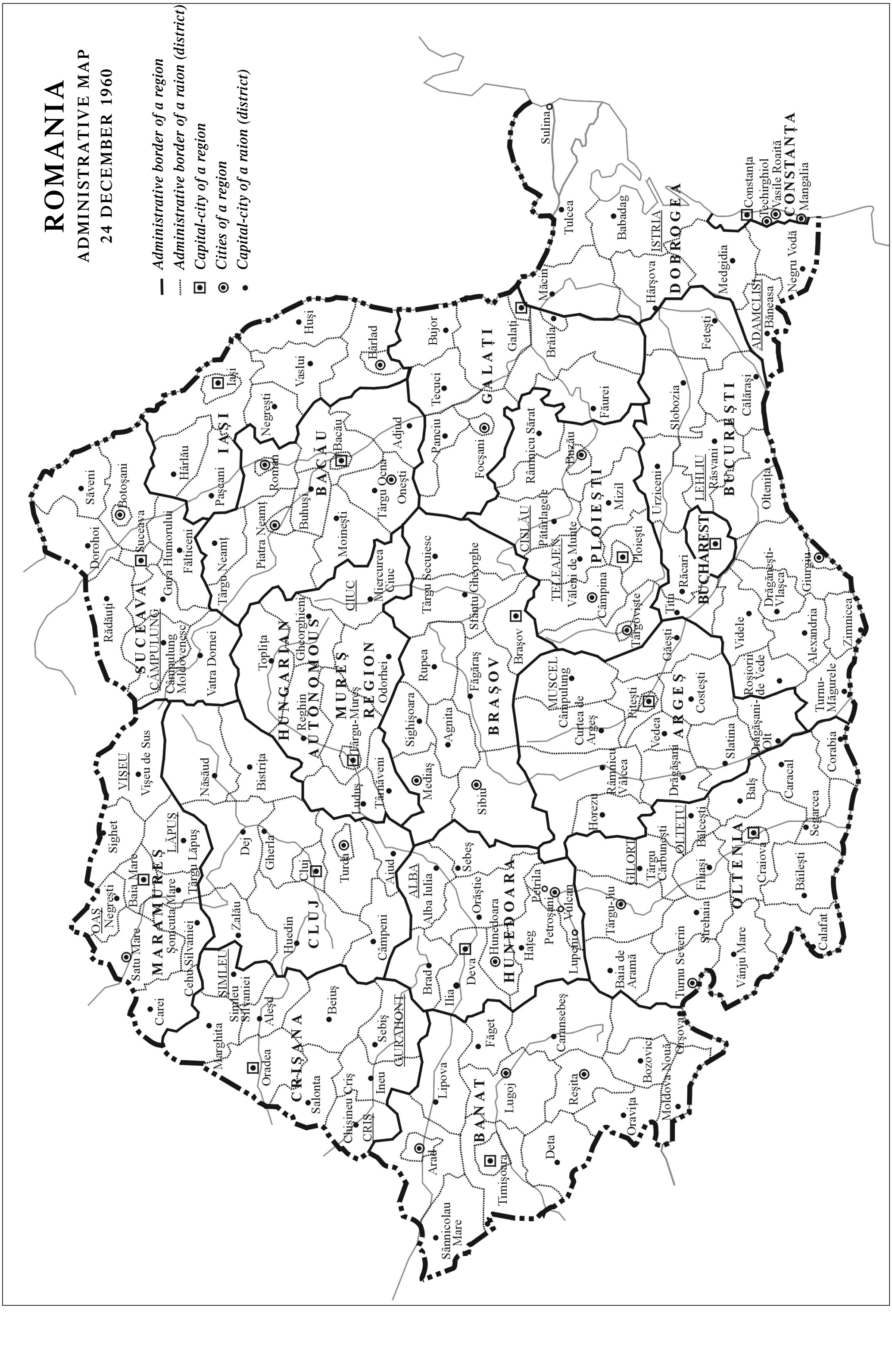
Name	*Commune and Region as of 1952*	*Topography*	*Land Fertility*	*Economy*	*Pop. in 1956*	*Ethnic Composition*	*Religious Composition*	*Collectivization Beginning/End*		*Degree of Collect.*
Aurel Vlaicu	Şibot/ Hunedoara	Plain	Medium	Agriculture, animal husbandry	812	Romanians, Germans	Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans	1958	summer 1959	Total
Corund	Corund/ HAR	Hilly, mount-ainous area	Poor	Agriculture, crafts (pottery)	3,629	Hungarians	Roman Catholics, Unitarians	1962	March 1962	Total
Darabani	Darabani/ Suceava	Hilly area	Medium	Agriculture, crafts	5,281	Romanians, Jews	Eastern Orthodox, neo-Protestants, Jews	1950	March 1962	Total
Dobrosloveni	Dobrosloveni/ Craiova	Plain	Superior	Agriculture, vegetable production	1,298	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox	June 1958	March 1961	Total
Domaşnea	Domaşnea/ Timişoara	Mount-ainous area	Medium	Animal husbandry, orchards, agriculture	1,783	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox	March 1962	April 1962	Quasi-total
Ieud	Ieud/ Baia Mare	Mount-ainous area, with plain regions	Poor	Animal husbandry, agriculture, orchards	3,715	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox, Greek Catholics	March 1950	1962	Partial

Jurilovca	Jurilovca/ Constanţa	Plain	Poor	Fishing, agriculture	3,489	Russians, Romanians	Old Believers, Eastern Orthodox	1950	October 1957	Quasi-total
Lueta/Lövéte	Lueta/ HAR	Mount-ainous area	Poor	Agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry	3,066	Hungarians	Roman Catholics, Protestants	1955	1962	Partial
Măgina	Cacova/Cluj	Hilly area	Medium	Agriculture orchards, viticulture	790	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox	Jan. 1961	March 1961	Total
Mircea	Reviga/ Bucureşti	Plain	Superior	Agriculture	618	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox	1959	1959	Total
Năneşti	Năneşti/ Galaţi	Plain	Medium	Agriculture	1,982	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox, the Evangelical movement "The Lord's Army"	1959	1962	Total
Poiana Sibiului	Poiana Sibiului/ Hunedoara	Mount-ainous area	Poor	Sheep husbandry, seasonal migration	4,084	Romanians, Roma	Eastern Orthodox	—	—	Not Colec-tivized
Reviga	Reviga/ Bucureşti	Plain	Superior	Agriculture	2,301	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox	1959	1962	Total

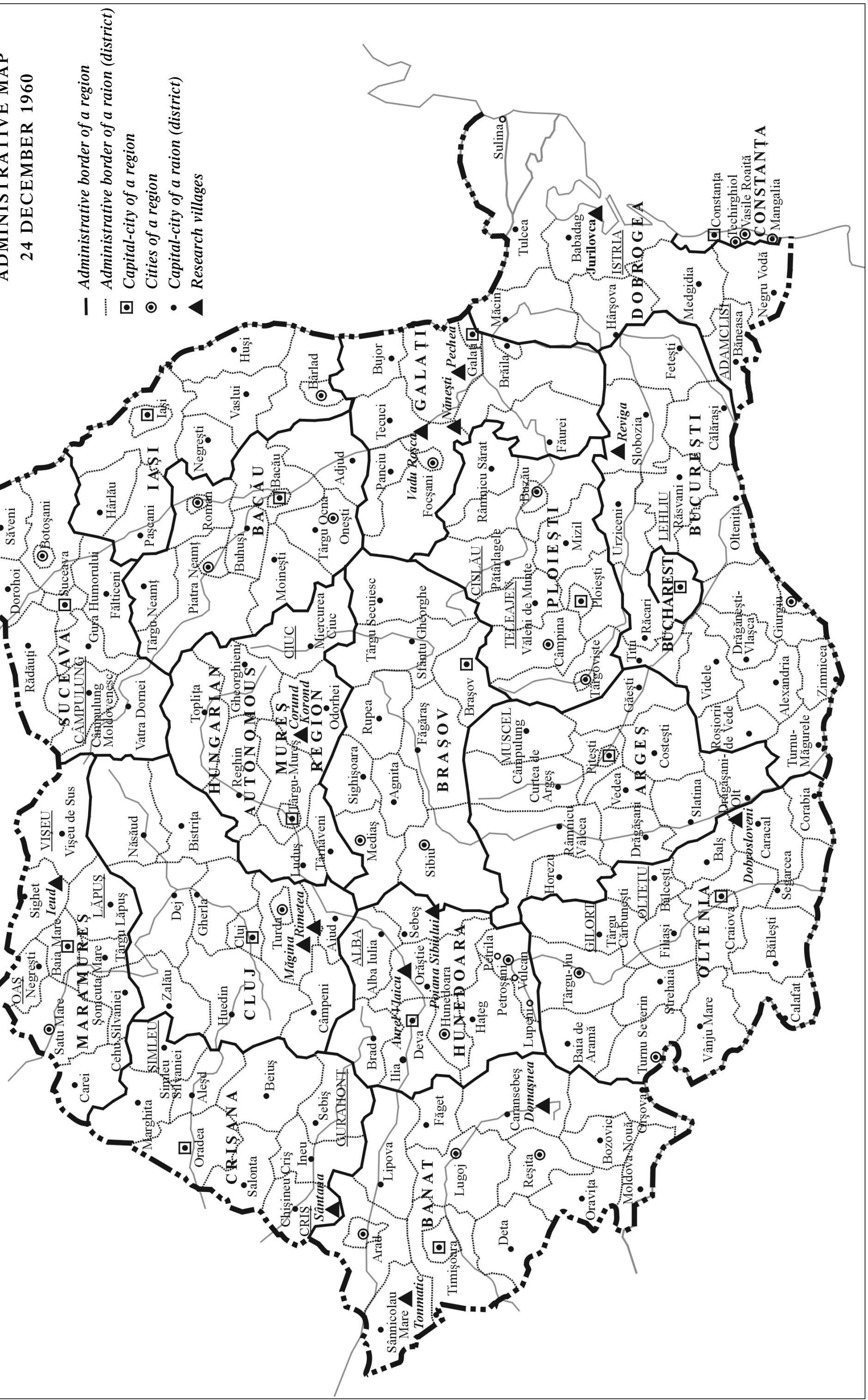
Name	*Commune and Region as of 1952*	*Topography*	*Land Fertility*	*Economy*	*Pop. in 1956*	*Ethnic Composition*	*Religious Composition*	*Collectivization Beginning/End*		*Degree of Collect.*
Rimetea	Rimetea/ Cluj	Mount-ainous area	Poor	Mining, stone industry, agriculture	1,135	Hungarians	Unitarians	1952	1961	Total
Rovine	Reviga/ Bucureşti	Plain	Superior	Agriculture	1,852	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox	1956	1957	Total
Sânpaul	Sânpaul/ HAR	Hilly area	Good	Agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry	835	Hungarians	Unitarians	1952	1962	Total
Sântana	Sântana/ Arad	Plain	Superior	Agriculture	11,846	Germans (Swabians), Romanians, Hungarians	Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox	1949	1962	Total
Tomnatic/ Triebswetter	Tomnatic/ Arad	Plain	Superior	Agriculture, viticulture	3,501	Germans (Swabians), Romanians, Hungarians	Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox	1950	1957	Total
Vadu Roşca	Vultur/ Galați	Plain	Medium	Agriculture, crafts	1,089	Romanians	Eastern Orthodox	1959	1962	Total


ROMANIA
ADMINISTRATIVE MAP
1950
Administrative border of a region
Administrative border of a raion (district)
Capital-city of a region
Capital-city of a raion (district)
Other cities
BOTOŞANI
SUCEAVA
RODNA
BAIA MARE
MUREŞ
CLUJ
BIHOR
ARAD
TIMIŞOARA
HUNEDOARA
SIBIU
STALIN
PUTNA
IAŞI
BACĂU
BARLAD
GALAŢI
BUZĂU
PRAHOVA
ARGEŞ
VALCEA
GORJ
SEVERIN
DOLJ
TELEORMAN
BUCUREŞTI
IALOMITA
CONSTANTA
Botoşani
Suceava
Rodna
Baia Mare
Cluj
Oradea
Arad
Timişoara
Deva
Sibiu
Iaşi
Bacău
Bârlad
Galaţi
Braila
Buzău
Ploieşti
Piteşti
Craiova
Târgu Jiu
Slatina
Bucureşti
Constanţa
Tulcea
Sulina
Mangalia

ROMANIA
ADMINISTRATIVE MAP
1952
Administrative border of a region
Administrative border of a raion (district)
Capital-city of a region
Cities of a region
Capital-city of a raion (district)
Other cities
SUCEAVA
BAIA MARE
CLUJ
ORADEA
ARAD
TIMIŞOARA
HUNGARIAN AUTONOMOUS REGION
IAŞI
BACAU
BÂRLAD
STALIN REGION
HUNEDOARA
PITEŞTI
CRAIOVA
PLOIEŞTI
GALAŢI
BUCUREŞTI
CONSTANTA
Bucharest


ROMANIA
ADMINISTRATIVE MAP
24 DECEMBER 1960
Administrative border of a region
Administrative border of a raion (district)
Capital-city of a region
Cities of a region
Capital-city of a raion (district)

LIST OF RESEARCH VILLAGES



List of Abbreviations

ACNSAS – *Arhiva Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității*, The Archive of the National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives, Bucharest.
ANIC – *Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale*, National Central Historical Archives, Bucharest.
ASRI – *Arhiva Serviciului Român de Informații*, Archive of the Romanian Information Service, Bucharest.
BCS – *Biblioteca Centrală de Stat*, Central State Library, Bucharest.
BO – *Buletinul Oficial*, Official Bulletin.
CAP – *Cooperativă Agricolă de Producție*, Agricultural Production Cooperative, socialist collective farm.
CC – Central Committee (of the Romanian Communist Party).
CHD – *Colecția de Hotărâri şi Dispoziții ale Consiliului de Miniştri al R.P.R.*, Collections of Resolutions and Instructions of the Council of Ministers of the Romanian People's Republic.
DJAN – *Direcția Județeană a Arhivelor Naționale*, County Branch of the National Archives.
dos. – File.
f. – Page.
fond – Archival fond.
fond "D" – Fond "Documentar," Documentary Fond, (ASRI).
fond "P" – Fond "Penal," Penal Fond, (ASRI).
ha – Hectare(s).
MO – *Monitorul Oficial, Official Monitor.*
PCR – *Partidul Comunist Român*, the Romanian Communist Party (RPC).
PMR – *Partidul Muncitoresc Român*, the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP).
RAM – *Regiunea Autonomă Maghiară*, the Hungarian Autonomous Region (HAR).
RPR – *Republica Populară Română*, the Romanian People's Republic.
UPM – *Uniunea Populară Maghiară*, Hungarian Popular Union (HPU).

Glossary of Terms

Arie – (Plural *ari*) 1/1,000 of a hectare.

Chiabur – (plural *chiaburi*) A word of Turkish origin (see *chibar*, meaning "rich" or "noble") employed by communist authorities to designate rich peasants, treated as class enemies in rural areas. Equivalent of the Russian word *kulak*.

Collective farm, or "collective" – Agricultural cooperatives formed through the (most often forceful) association of individual peasants. The status and organization of agricultural cooperatives emulated closely the Soviet model. (See also GAC)

CSCC – (*Comisia de Stat pentru Colectarea Cerealelor*, The State Commission for the Collection of Grain) Institution in charge of mandatory grain collection from the peasantry. Based on a vast and costly bureaucratic apparatus in rural areas, the institution was feared by peasants due to the highly coercive methods it employed. The name of the commission was altered several times, including CSCPA (*Comisia de Stat pentru Colectarea Produselor Agricole,* State Committee for the Collection of Agricultural Products) and CSVPA (*Comitetul de Stat pentru Valorificarea Produselor Agricole*, State Committee for the Capitalization of Agricultural Products).

Commune – (*Comună*) Administrative unit made up of one or several villages. Until 1950, several communes were grouped into a larger administrative unit called *plasă*. After 1950 they constituted a *raion*, or district.

County – (*Județ*) Traditional administrative unit in pre-communist Romania, made up of several *plase*. In 1950, authorities abolished counties, reorganizing the territory into regions (*regiuni*) following the Soviet model. In 1968, the old division into counties was reintroduced, but in a largely modified form as compared to pre-1945 boundaries. See Maps 1–3, page 496–498.

District – (*Raion*) An administrative unit created after the Soviet model; one *raion* was composed of several communes, and several *raioane* made up a region.

GAC – (*Gospodării Agricole Colective*, or Collective Agricultural Farms) Romanian collective farms, the equivalent of Soviet *kolkhoz*. In the 1960s, collective farms were renamed "CAP" (*Cooperative Agricole de Producție*, or Agricultural Production Cooperatives).

GAS, GOSTAT – (*Gospodării Agricole de Stat*, or State Agricultural Farms) State farms established on state land that had usually been confiscated from large landowners after the 1945 land reform. These "model" farms were meant to enlarge the socialist sector in agriculture and to put pressure on the private sector. In 1960, GASs changed their name to "IAS" (*Întreprinderi Agricole de Stat* or State Agricultural Enterprises). GASs were the equivalent of the Soviet State Farms, called *sovkhozes*.

Persuasion teams – (*Echipe de lămurire*) Ad-hoc teams formed by party activists, sympathizers or collaborators, in charge of persuading peasants to join collective farms. These teams had often a paramilitary character and used various methods of physical or psychological terror in order to forcefully enroll peasants into collective farms.

Persuasion work – (*Muncă de lămurire*) Propaganda activity carried out by ad-hoc persuasion teams, set up to convince the peasantry of the superiority of socialist agriculture over private, capitalist farming and to make them join collective forms of property, such as collective farms.

Plasă – Administrative unit created in 1950. One *plasă* was composed of several communes, and several *plase* made up a county (See Map 1, p. 496).

Quotas, or requisition quotas – (*Cote*) Forced requisitions of agricultural products (grains, meat, wool, milk, etc.) by the state from private owners. For the socialist state, requisitions were not only a form of appropriating agricultural products at artificially low prices, but also a means of controlling peasant households by increasing their economic vulnerability as a way of promoting collectivization. Forced requisitions were introduced in Romania after World War II, following the Soviet model, and were part and parcel of the process of collectivization. The system of forced requisitions was dismantled in 1956, after the Hungarian revolution.

Ration cards for food – (*Cartele alimentare*) First introduced in various European countries during World War I. In the Soviet Union, this system was made quasi-permanent, becoming a daily reality in peacetime, as well. In Romania the system was temporarily introduced during World War II, and then on a larger scale after the communist take-over, following the Soviet model. Abandoned after the economic consolidation of the communist regime, ration cards were reintroduced in

the 1980s as part of the regime's strategy of reducing public consumption in order to repay Romania's large foreign debt.

Region – (*Regiune*) Administrative unit introduced in Romania in 1950 following the Soviet model. One region was composed of several *raioane* (districts). In communist Romania, several administrative reorganizations were implemented in 1950, 1952 and 1960, resulting in significant changes in the name, borders and function of main administrative units (See Maps 1–3, p. 496–498).

Socialist transformation of agriculture – (*Transformarea socialistă a agriculturii*) Euphemism employed in the Communist regime's official, "wooden-language" to refer to the process of land collectivization and transformation of social relations in the rural world.

SMT – (*Stațiuni pentru Maşini şi Tractoare*, Machine and Tractor Stations) State companies in charge of the mechanization of socialist agriculture. In the 1960s and 1970s they were renamed SMA (*Stațiuni de Maşini Agricole*, or Stations for Agricultural Machinery).

TOZ – (*Tovarishchestvo po sovmestnoi Obrabotke Zemli*, or Association for Common Tilling of the Land) Loose Soviet agricultural association in which peasant members preserved their private ownership over land but worked it collectively and shared the harvest proportionally with their surface and work contribution. These associations spread in the earlier stages of the collectivization campaign, being generally seen by peasants as an alternative to full collectivization and by authorities as a step toward collective farms. In Romania they were referred to as *întovărăşiri*.

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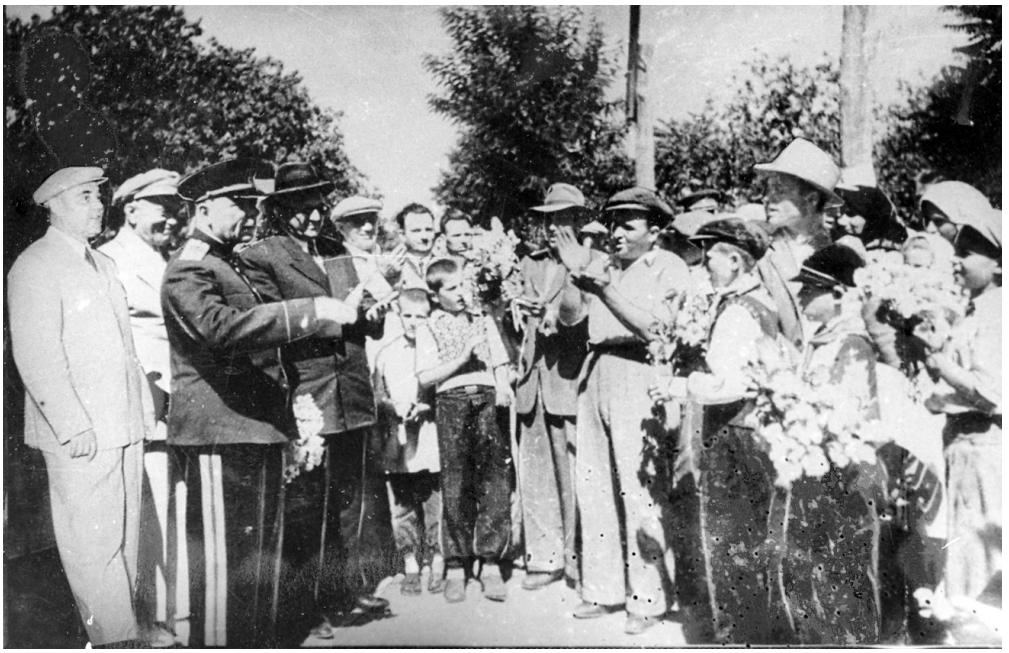
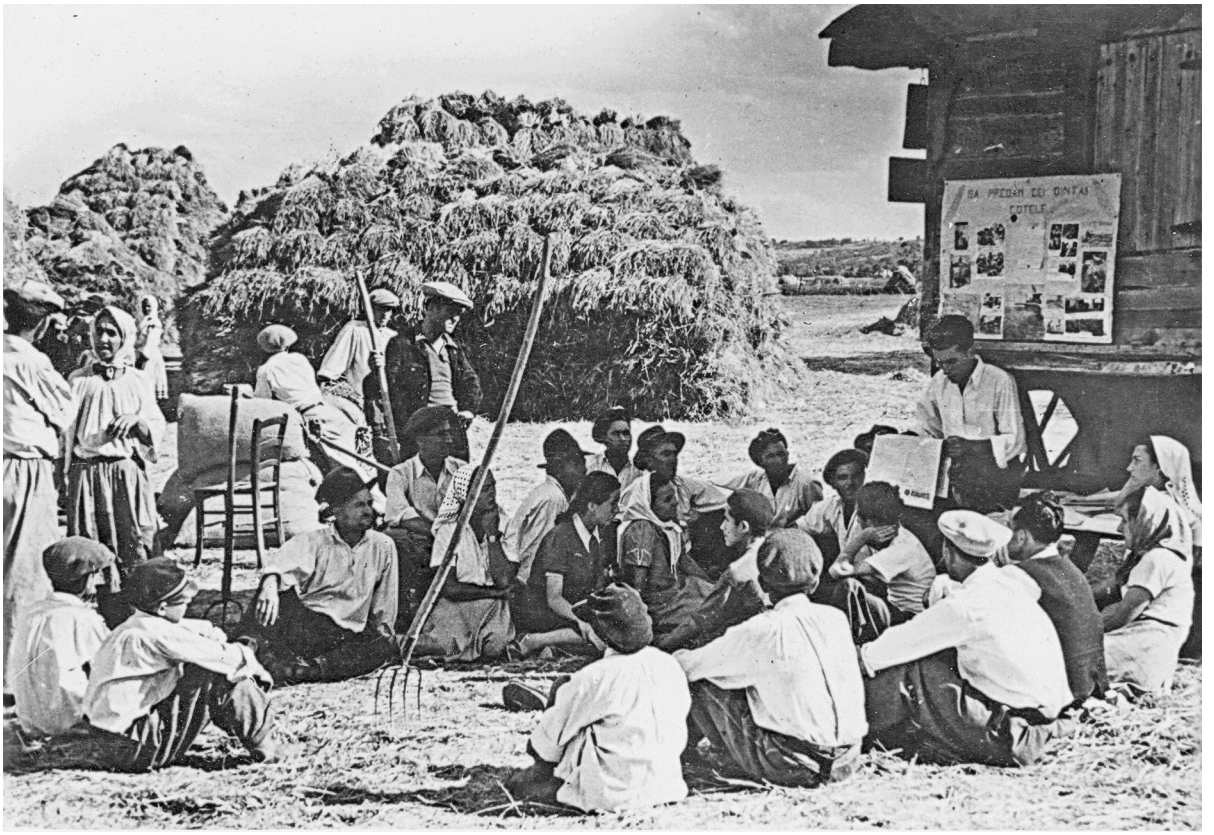


1 / The agrarian commission, assisted by numerous peasants, dividing the estate of a large landowner during the land reform of March 1945.

2 / Soviet authorities closely monitored the process of collectivization in Romania from its inception. See Marshal Voroshilov visiting the "Lenin's Path" collective farm, Livedea, Bucharest region, August 1949.

3 / Peasants signing up for membership in one of the first collective farms in Romania, Ceamurlia de Jos, Dobrogea, 1949 (for details, see pp. 112, 116, 136).

4 / Propaganda pictures with peasants signing petitions to join the collective farms in 1949 in Zăbrani, Arad, wearing folk costumes.



5 / Reading the official newspaper to a group of peasants in the fields of a collective farm, action organized by the cultural house in Livezeni, Dolj region (1950). The slogan of the poster on the wooden board reads: "Let's be the first ones who deliver the assigned requisition quotas."

6 / Propaganda picture from 1952, showing the achievements of socialist agriculture emphasizing the inclusion of women in the work force in traditionally "male" professions (such as driving), as well as the mechanization of agriculture.

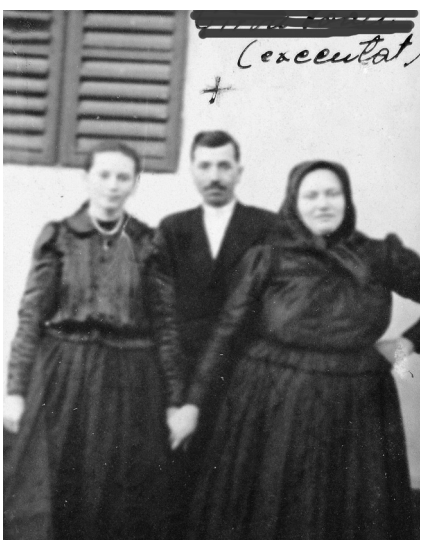
7–8 / The system of forced requisitions was an instrument of class struggle and a mechanism of ruining peasant households. At the same time, authorities remunerated collectivized farmers with crops in a celebratory atmosphere, in order to highlight the material benefits of enrolling in collective farms, as in the two pictures above (for details of such practices, see p. 287). The second such convoy, complete with musicians, was organized in 1952, after a peasant rebellion.

9 / The aggressive collectivization campaign generated numerous peasant revolts. In August 1949, in Arad and Bihor regions, angry peasants torched party headquarters and the city hall and destroyed communist propaganda symbols. See the interior of the city hall in Tăut, Bihor region, devastated by a peasant anti-collectivization riot. The torn portrait of the Communist leader Ana Pauker, then in charge of the Agrarian Commission of the CC, can be seen on the floor.

10 / Another form of resistance was blocking access to bridges into the village, as was the case in Batâr, Bihor region.

11 / Anti-*chiabur* propaganda from 1950. The caricature attributes chauvinistic feelings to the *chiaburi* and presents the collective farm as an example of a peaceful multi-ethnic cooperation. The text reads as follows: "Among *chiaburi*: You see, despite the fact that they are of different ethnic origins ['nationalities,' in the communist language], they have overcome the "ancient hatred" which we so assiduously promoted, and get along well with each-other!"

12–13 / The violent repression resulted in the execution of many resistant peasants. As in the cases of I.G. and D.M., the family was left with only an old picture of them.



14 / Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej and the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev on a visit to the collective farm of Livedea, August 1955.

15 / April 3–6, 1958. Party meeting with peasants working in the socialist agricultural sector, Constanța. Gheorghiu-Dej urges completion of collectivization in the entire country.

16 / Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej among collective farm members in Nazna, Mureş region, September 1959. Such propaganda pictures were meant to stimulate peasants to join the collective farms.

17 / The Romanian leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and other high party officials in the fields of the Grabat State Farm, Banat region, June 1961.

The result of a project initiated and coordinated by Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, research for this volume was conducted by a group of twenty anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and literary critics from Romania, United States, and Great Britain. Employing interdisciplinary methods and using a wealth of previously unexplored archival and oral sources, the authors managed to produce the most solid monograph to date on the process of collectivization in Romania.

"The process of collectivization overturned the daily life of the vast majority of Romania's population, institutionalizing new social relations and practices that were to characterize the communist regime in the decades to come. To contribute to a better understanding of the communist period, we initiated this international, comparative, and interdisciplinary project. We are pleased that, unlike collectivization itself, our collective endeavour has been fruitful."

Gail Kligman
University of California, Los Angeles

Katherine Verdery
City University of New York

"This remarkable volume goes well beyond a merely descriptive overview of the collectivization of agriculture in Romania. It offers, for the first time, a subtle analysis of the phenomenon itself, of its consequences for the economic situation of the peasantry, and its effects on peasant attitudes toward property and political power. The interdisciplinary nature of the contributions, their analytical sharpness, and the rigour of the research recommend this study as a fundamental text for understanding not only the communist regime but also its impact on the transformation of property relations after 1990."

Dennis Deletant
University College London,
and University of Amsterdam

"With the publication of this work, another page in the tragic history of post-1945 Romania has been written. The volume focuses in detail on the mechanisms employed by the authorities to subordinate the peasantry, and on peasant resistance to this aggression. The legacy of this historical disaster is still evident today. The book is an impressive achievement, successfully realized by an interdisciplinary group of remarkable foreign and Romanian researchers."

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